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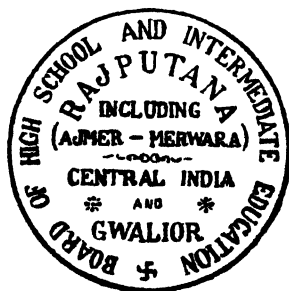
# INTERMEDIATE PROSE SELECTIONS

Edited by

C. MAHAJAN, M.A.,

Vice-Principal and Professor of English,

St. John's College, Agra.



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## INTRODUCTION

In the following pages a collection has been made from English prose writers, of passages chosen to illustrate the progress of prose up to modern times. An anthology, whether of prose or verse, is bound to have drawbacks of one kind or another. Prose, by being more informative and intimate than poetry, cannot be condensed in a representative form within the brief range of a selection like the present. However, an attempt has been made here to secure topical variety of subjects by making the extracts roughly illustrative of English prose from Bacon to Belloc. The chief interest of the volume, therefore, will lie in its being a record, not so much of unity, as of diversity in subjects and treatment.

The student for whom these selections are intended, will be introduced to some of the various purposes to which English prose has been put—reflection, narration, description, scientific analysis and exposition. He will find Steele and Emerson refreshingly reminiscent; Goldsmith, and Wells agreeably prophetic; Macaulay and Hazlitt, Lamb and Irving, pouring their wealth of description and warmth of humour on the excitement of travel and domestic sketches; in the essays of Gardiner, with their directness and felicity of exposition, some issues and obligations of citizenship will be expounded in an engaging manner; the extracts from Fabre and Huxley will not fail to whet the student's appetite for the 'mysteries' of Science, and lead him to an awakened interest in the things around us. Thus the student will find both instruction and pleasure while he is in such distinguished company which will provide him such varied fare.



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## OF STUDIES.

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament is in discourse; and for ability is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one: but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humour of a scholar: they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. [Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.] Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and therefore, if a man write little he had

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need have a great memory; if he confer little he had need have a present wit; and if he read little he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores*; nay, there is no stone or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like; so, if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen; for they are *Cymini sectores*. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

FRANCIS BACON. (1561—1616)

## II

### REFLECTIONS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

When I am in a serious humour, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another: the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances, that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them, but that they were born and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

\* \* \* \* \*

The life of these men is finely described in holy writ by "the path of an arrow," which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful



of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixt with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelvemonth. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed, indeed, that the present war had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honour to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation, from the turn of their public monuments.

and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius, before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesly Shovel's monument has very often given me great offence: instead of the brave rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honour. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tomb-stone,

my heart melts with compassion ; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves. I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow ; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

JOSEPH ADDISON. (1672—1719)

### III

#### RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

There are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think every thing lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the names of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with, that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those, with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure,

it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling Papa; for, I knew not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of

my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since insnared me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We, that are very old, are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is, that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely and unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions, according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless and widows on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men, who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make that no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when

we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once.

Here (were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness) I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death, of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin! how ignorantly did she charm, how carelessly excel? Oh death, thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of death become the pretty trifler? I still behold the smiling earth—A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my servant knocked at my closet-door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house. Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate, that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicsome. It revived the spirits, without firing the blood. We commended it until two of the clock this morning; and having to-day met a little before dinner, we found, that though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

SIR RICHARD STEELE. (1672—1729)

LETTER TO THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD

My Lord,

I have lately been informed, by the proprietor of the *World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work, through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.



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(The shepherd in 'Virgil' grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.)

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I shall conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

My Lord,

Your lordship's most humble,  
Most obedient servant,

Sam. Johnson.

SAMUEL JOHNSON. (1709—1784)

## V

### THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN A GARRET

The gods they challenge, and affect the skies:  
Heaved on Olympus, tottering Ossa stood;  
On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood.—*Pope.*

Nothing has more retarded the advancement of learning than the disposition of vulgar minds to ridicule and vilify what they cannot comprehend. All industry must be excited by hope; and as the student often proposes no other reward to himself than praise, he is easily discouraged by contempt and insult. He who brings with him into a clamorous multitude the timidity of recluse speculation, and has never hardened his front in public life, or accustomed his passions to the vicissitudes and accidents, the triumphs and defeats of mixed conversation, will blush at the share of petulant incredulity, and suffer himself to be driven by a burst of laughter from the fortresses of demonstration. The mechanist will be afraid to assert before hardy contradiction the possibility of tearing down bulwarks with a silkworm's thread; and the astronomer of relating the rapidity of light, the distance of the fixed stars, and the height of the lunar mountains.

If I could by any efforts have shaken off this cowardice I had not sheltered myself under a borrowed name, nor applied to you for the means of communicating to the public the theory of a garret: a subject which, except some slight and transient strictures, has been hitherto

neglected by those who were best qualified to adorn it, either for want of leisure to prosecute the various researches in which a nice discussion must engage them, or because it requires such diversity of knowledge, and such extent of curiosity, as is scarcely to be found in any single intellect; or perhaps others foresaw the tumults which would be raised against them, and confined their knowledge to their own breasts, and abandoned prejudice and folly to the direction of chance.

That the professors of literature generally reside in the highest stories has been immemorially observed. The wisdom of the ancients was well acquainted with the intellectual advantages of an elevated situation: why else were the Muses stationed on Olympus, or Parnassus, by those who could with equal right have raised them bowers in the vale of Tempe, or erected their altars among the flexures of Meander? Why was Jove himself nursed upon a mountain? or why did the goddesses, when the prize of beauty was contested, try the cause upon the top of Ida? Such were the fictions by which the great masters of the earlier ages endeavoured to inculcate to posterity the importance of a garret, which, though they had been long obscured by the negligence and ignorance of succeeding times, were well enforced by the celebrated symbol of Pythagoras,

“When the wind blows, worship its echo.”

This could not but be understood by his disciples as an inviolable injunction to live in a garret, which I have found frequently visited by the echo and the wind. Nor was the tradition wholly obliterated in the age of Augustus, for Tibullus evidently congratulates himself upon his garret, not without some allusion to the Pythagorean precept:

*Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem—  
Aut, gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit auster  
Securum sommos, imbre juvante, sequi.*

'How sweet in sleep to pass the careless hours,  
Lull'd by the beating winds and dashing showers.'

And it is impossible not to discover the fondness of Lucretius, an earlier writer, for a garret, in his description of the lofty towers of serene learning, and of the pleasure with which a wise man looks down upon the confused and erratic state of the world moving below him:

*Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere  
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena;  
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre  
Errare, atque viam palanteis quaerere vitae.*

'Tis sweet thy labouring steps to guide  
To virtue's heights, with wisdom well supplied,  
And all the magazine of learning fortified:  
From thence to look below on human kind,  
Bewildered in the maze of life, and blind.'—*Dryden*.

The institution has, indeed, continued to our own time; the garret is still the usual receptacle of the philosopher and poet; but this, like many ancient customs, is perpetuated only by an accidental imitation, without knowledge of the original reason for which it was established:

*Causa latet: res est notissima.*

'The cause is secret, but the effect is known.'

—*Addison*.

Conjectures have, indeed, been advanced concerning these habitations of literature, but without much satisfaction to the judicious inquirer. Some have imagined that the garret is generally chosen by the wits as most easily rented; and concluded that no man rejoices in his aerial abode, but on the days of payment. Others suspect that a garret is chiefly convenient, as it is remoter than any other part of the house from the outer door, which is often observed to be infested by visitants, who talk incessantly of beer, or linen, or a coat, and repeat the same sounds every morning, and sometimes again in the afternoon.

without any variation, except that they grow daily more importunate and clamorous, and raise their voices in time from mournful murmurs to raging vociferations. This eternal monotony is always detestable to a man whose chief pleasure is to enlarge his knowledge and vary his ideas. Others talk of freedom from noise, and abstraction from common business or amusements; and some, yet more visionary, tell us that the faculties are enlarged by open prospects, and that the fancy is more at liberty when the eye ranges without confinement.

These conveniences may perhaps all be found in a well-chosen garret; but surely they cannot be supposed sufficiently important to have operated invariably upon different climates, distant ages, and separate nations. Of a universal practice, there must still be presumed a universal cause, which, however recondite and abstruse, may be perhaps reserved to make me illustrious by its discovery, and you by its promulgation.

It is universally known that the faculties of the mind are invigorated or weakened by the state of the body, and that the body is in a great measure regulated by the various compressions of the ambient element. The effects of the air in the production or cure of corporeal maladies have been acknowledged from the time of Hippocrates; but no man has yet sufficiently considered how far it may influence the operations of the genius, though every day affords instances of local understanding, of wits and reasoners, whose faculties are adapted to some single spot, and who, when they are removed to any other place, sink at once into silence and stupidity. I have discovered, by a long series of observations, that invention and elocution suffer great impediments from dense and impure vapours, and that the tenuity of a defecated air, at a proper distance from the surface of the earth, accelerates the fancy, and sets at liberty those intellectual powers which were before shackled by too strong attraction, and unable to expand

themselves under the pressure of a gross atmosphere. I have found dullness to quicken into sentiment in a thin ether, as water, though not very hot, boils in a receiver partly exhausted; and heads, in appearance empty, have teemed with notions upon rising ground, as the flaccid sides of a football would have swelled out into stiffness and extension.

For this reason I never think myself qualified to judge decisively of any man's faculties whom I have only known in one degree of elevation; but take some opportunity of attending him from the cellar to the garret, and try upon him all the various degrees of rarefaction and condensation, tension and laxity. If he is neither vivacious aloft, nor serious below, I then consider him as hopeless; but as it seldom happens that I do not find the temper to which the texture of his brain is fitted, I accommodate him in time with a tube of mercury, first marking the point most favourable to his intellects, according to rules which I have long studied, and which I may, perhaps, reveal to mankind in a complete treatise of barometrical pneumatology.

Another cause of the gaiety and sprightliness of the dwellers in garrets is probably the increase of that vertiginous motion, with which we are carried round by the diurnal revolution of the earth. The power of agitation upon the spirits is well known; every man has felt his heart lightened in a rapid vehicle, or on a galloping horse; and nothing is plainer, than that he who towers to the fifth story, is whirled through more space by every circumrotation than another that grovels upon the ground-floor. The nations between the tropics are known to be fiery, inconstant, inventive, and fanciful; because, living at the utmost length of the earth's diameter, they are carried about with more swiftness than those whom nature has placed nearer to the poles; and, therefore, as it becomes a wise man to struggle with the inconveniences of his

country, we must actuate our languor by taking a few turns round the centre in a garret.

If you imagine that I ascribe to air and motion effects which they cannot produce, I desire you to consult your own memory, and consider whether you have never known a man acquire a reputation in his garret, which, when fortune or a patron had placed him upon the first floor, he was unable to maintain; and who never recovered his former vigour of understanding till he was restored to his original situation. That a garret will make every man a wit I am very far from supposing; I know there are some who would continue blockheads even on the summit of the Andes or on the peak of Teneriffe. But let not any man be considered as unimprovable till this potent remedy has been tried; for perhaps he was formed to be great only in a garret, as the joiner of Aretaeus was rational in no other place but in his own shop.

I think a frequent removal to various distances from the centre so necessary to a just estimate of intellectual abilities, and consequently of so great use in education, that if I hoped that the public could be persuaded to so expensive an experiment, I would propose, that there should be a cavern dug, and a tower erected, like those which Bacon describes in Solomon's house, for the expansion and concentration of understanding, according to the exigence of different employments, or constitutions. Perhaps some that fume away in meditations upon time and space in the tower might compose tables of interest at a certain depth; and he that upon level ground stagnates in silence, or creeps in narrative, might, at the height of half a mile, ferment into merriment, sparkle with repartee, and froth with declamation.

Addison observes that we may find the heat of Virgil's climate in some lines of his Georgic; so when I read a composition I immediately determine the height of the author's habitation. As an elaborate performance is

commonly said to smell of the lamp, my commendation of a noble thought, a sprightly sally, or a bold figure, is to pronounce it fresh from the garret; an expression which would break from me upon the perusal of most of your papers, did I not believe that you sometimes quit the garret, and ascend into the cock-loft.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.



## VI

### ASEM THE MAN-HATER, AN EASTERN TALE.

Where Tauris lifts its head above the storm, and presents nothing to the sight of the distant traveller but a prospect of nodding rocks, falling torrents, and all the variety of tremendous nature; on the bleak bosom of this frightful mountain, secluded from society and detesting the ways of men, lived Asem the Man-hater.

Asem had spent his youth with men; had shared in their amusements; and had been taught to love his fellow creatures with the most ardent affection: but from the tenderness of his disposition, he exhausted all his fortune in relieving the wants of the distressed. The petitioner never sued in vain; the weary traveller never passed his door; he only desisted from doing good when he had no longer the power of relieving.

From a fortune thus spent in benevolence, he expected a grateful return from those he had formerly relieved; and made his application with confidence of redress: the ungrateful world soon grew weary of his importunity; for pity is but a short-lived passion. He soon, therefore, began to view mankind in a very different light from that in which he had before beheld them: he perceived a thousand vices he had never before suspected to exist: wherever he turned, ingratitude, dissimulation, and treachery, contributed to increase his detestation of them. Resolved therefore to continue no longer in a world which he hated, and which repaid his detestation with contempt, he retired to this region of sterility, in order to

brood over his resentment in solitude, and converse with the only honest heart he knew; namely, with his own.

A cave was his only shelter from the inclemency of the weather; fruits gathered with difficulty from the mountain's side, his only food; and his drink was fetched with danger and toil from the headlong torrent. In this manner he lived, sequestered from society, passing the hours in meditation, and sometimes exulting that he was able to live independently of his fellow creatures.

At the foot of the mountain, an extensive lake displayed its glassy bosom; reflecting, on its broad surface, the impending horrors of the mountain. To this capacious mirror he would sometimes descend, and, reclining on its steep bank, cast an eager look on the smooth expanse that lay before him. 'How beautiful,' he often cried, 'is Nature! how lovely, even in her wildest scenes! How finely contrasted is the level plain that lies beneath me, with yon awful pile that hides its tremendous head in clouds! But the beauty of these scenes is noway comparable with their utility; from hence an hundred rivers are supplied, which distribute health and verdure to the various countries through which they flow. Every part of the universe is beautiful, just, and wise, but man: vile man is a solecism in Nature; the only monster in the creation. Tempests and whirlwinds have their use; but vicious, ungrateful man is a blot in the fair page of universal beauty. Why was I born of that detested species, whose vices are almost a reproach to the wisdom of the Divine Creator! Were men entirely free from vice, all would be uniformity, harmony, and order. A world of moral rectitude should be the result of a perfectly moral agent. Why, why then, O Allah! must I be thus confined in darkness, doubt, and despair.'

Just as he uttered the word 'despair,' he was going to plunge into the lake beneath him, at once to satisfy his doubts, and put a period to his anxiety; when he perceived

a most majestic being walking on the surface of the water, and approaching the bank on which he stood. So unexpected an object at once checked his purpose; he stopped, contemplated, and fancied he saw something awful and divine in his aspect.

'Son of Adam,' cried the Genius, 'stop thy rash purpose; the Father of the Faithful has seen thy justice, thy integrity, thy miseries, and hath sent me to afford and administer relief. Give me thine hand, and follow, without trembling, wherever I shall lead; in me behold the Genius of Conviction, kept by the great Prophet, to turn from their errors those who go astray, not from curiosity, but a rectitude of intention. Follow me, and be wise.'

Asem immediately descended upon the lake, and his guide conducted him along the surface of the water; till, coming near the centre of the lake, they both began to sink; the waters closed over their heads; they descended several hundred fathoms, till Asem, just ready to give up his life as inevitably lost, found himself with his celestial guide in another world, at the bottom of the waters, where human foot had never trod before. His astonishment was beyond description, when he saw a sun like that he had left, a serene sky over his head, and blooming verdure under his feet.

'I plainly perceive your amazement,' said the Genius; 'but suspend it for a while. This world was formed by Allah, at the request, and under the inspection, of our great Prophet, who once entertained the same doubts which filled your mind when I found you, and from the consequence of which you were so lately rescued. The rational inhabitants of this world are formed agreeable to your own ideas; they are absolutely without vice. In other respects it resembles your earth, but differs from it in being wholly inhabited by men who never do wrong. If you find this world more agreeable than that you so lately left, you have free permission to spend the remainder of

your days in it; but permit me, for some time, to attend you, that I may silence your doubts, and make you better acquainted with your company and your new habitation.'

'A world without vice! Rational beings without immorality!' cried Asem, in a rapture; 'I thank thee, O Allah, who hast at length heard my petitions; this, this indeed will produce happiness, ecstasy, and ease. O for an immortality, to spend it among men who are incapable of ingratitude, injustice, fraud, violence, and a thousand other crimes, that render society miserable.'

'Cease thine acclamations,' replied the Genius, 'look around thee; reflect on every object and action before us, and communicate to me the result of thine observations. Lead wherever you think proper, I shall be your attendant and instructor.' Asem and his companion travelled on in silence for some time, the former being entirely lost in astonishment; but, at last, recovering his former serenity, he could not help observing, that the face of the country bore a near resemblance to that he had left, except that this subterranean world still seemed to retain its primeval wildness.

'Here,' cried Asem, 'I perceive animals of prey, and others that seem only designed for their subsistence; it is the very same in the world over our heads. But had I been permitted to instruct our Prophet, I would have removed this defect, and formed no voracious or destructive animals, which only prey on the other parts of the creation.'

'Your tenderness for inferior animals is, I find, remarkable,' said the Genius, smiling, 'but, with regard to meaner creatures, this world exactly resembles the other; and, indeed, for obvious reasons: for the earth can support a more considerable number of animals, by their thus becoming food for each other, than if they had lived entirely on the vegetable productions. So that animals of different natures thus formed, instead of lessening their

multitude, subsist in the greatest number possible. But let us hasten on to the inhabited country before us, and see what that offers for instruction.'

They soon gained the utmost verge of the forest, and entered the country inhabited by men without vice; and Asem anticipated in idea the rational delight he hoped to experience in such an innocent society. But they had scarce left the confines of the wood, when they beheld one of the inhabitants flying with hasty steps, and terror in his countenance, from an army of squirrels that closely pursued him. 'Heavens!' cried Asem, 'why does he fly? What can he fear from animals so contemptible?' He had scarce spoke when he perceived two dogs pursuing another of the human species, who, with equal terror and haste, attempted to avoid them. 'This,' cried Asem to his guide, 'is truly surprising; nor can I conceive the reason for so strange an action.' 'Every species of animals,' replied the Genius, 'has of late grown very powerful in this country; for the inhabitants, at first, thinking it unjust to use either fraud or force in destroying them, they have insensibly increased, and now frequently ravage their harmless frontiers.' 'But they should have been destroyed,' cried Asem; 'you see the consequence of such neglect.' 'Where is then that tenderness you so lately expressed for subordinate animals?' replied the Genius, smiling: 'you seem to have forgot that branch of justice.' 'I must acknowledge my mistake,' returned Asem; 'I am now convinced that we must be guilty of tyranny and injustice to the brute creation, if we would enjoy the world ourselves. But let us no longer observe the duty of man to these irrational creatures, but survey their connections with one another.'

As they walked farther up the country, the more he was surprised to see no vestiges of handsome houses, no cities, nor any mark of elegant design. His conductor, perceiving his surprise, observed, that the inhabitants of

this new world were perfectly content with their ancient simplicity; each had a house, which, though homely, was sufficient to lodge his little family; they were too good to build houses, which could only increase their own pride, and the envy of the spectator; what they built was for convenience, and not for show.' 'At least, then,' said Asem, 'they have neither architects, painters, or statuaries, in their society; but these are idle arts, and may be spared. However, before I spend much more time here, you should have my thanks for introducing me into the society of some of their wisest men: there is scarce any pleasure to me equalled to a refined conversation; there is nothing of which I am so enamoured as wisdom.' 'Wisdom!' replied the instructor, 'how ridiculous! We have no wisdom here, for we have no occasion for it; true wisdom is only a knowledge of our own duty, and the duty of others to us; but of what use is such wisdom here? Each intuitively performs what is right in himself, and expects the same from others. If by wisdom you should mean vain curiosity and empty speculation, as such pleasures have their origin in vanity, luxury, or avarice, we are too good to pursue them.' 'All this may be right,' says Asem; 'but methinks I observe a solitary disposition prevail among the people; each family keeps separately within their own precincts, without society, or without intercourse.' 'That, indeed is true,' replied the other, 'here is no established society; nor should there be any: all societies are made either through fear or friendship; the people we are among, are too good to fear each other; and there are no motives to private friendship, where all are equally meritorious.' 'Well then,' said the sceptic, 'as I am to spend my time here, if I am to have neither the polite arts, nor wisdom, nor friendship, in such a world, I should be glad, at least, of an easy companion, who may tell me his thoughts, and to whom I may communicate mine.' 'And to what purpose should either do this?' says the Genius: 'flattery or curiosity are

vicious motives, and never allowed of here; and wisdom is out of the question.'

'Still, however,' said Asem, 'the inhabitants must be happy; each is contented with his own possessions, nor avariciously endeavours to heap up more than is necessary for his own subsistence: each has therefore leisure to pity those that stand in need of his compassion.' He had scarce spoken when his ears were assaulted with the lamentations of a wretch who sat by the wayside, and, in the most deplorable distress, seemed gently to murmur at his own misery. Asem immediately ran to his relief, and found him in the last stage of a consumption. 'Strange,' cried the son of Adam, 'that men who are free from vice should thus suffer so much misery without relief!' 'Be not surprised,' said the wretch who was dying, 'would it not be the utmost injustice for beings who have only just sufficient to support themselves, and are content with a bare subsistence, to take it from their own mouths to put it into mine? They never are possessed of a single meal more than is necessary; and what is barely necessary cannot be dispensed with.' 'They should have been supplied with more than is necessary,' cried Asem; 'and yet I contradict my own opinion but a moment before: all is doubt, perplexity, and confusion. Even the want of ingratitude is no virtue here, since they never received a favour. They have, however, another excellence, yet behind; the love of their country is still, I hope, one of their darling virtues.' 'Peace, Asem,' replied the Guardian, with a countenance not less severe than beautiful, 'nor forfeit all thy pretensions to wisdom; the same selfish motives by which we prefer our own interest to that of others, induce us to regard our country preferably to that of another. Nothing less than universal benevolence is free from vice, and that you see is practised here.' 'Strange!' cries the disappointed pilgrim, in an agony of distress; 'what sort of a world am I now introduced to? There

is scarce a single virtue, but that of temperance, which they practise; and in that they are noway superior to the very brute creation. There is scarce an amusement which they enjoy, fortitude, liberality, friendship, wisdom, conversation, and love of country, are all virtues entirely unknown here; thus it seems, that, to be unacquainted with vice is not to know virtue. Take me, O my Genius, back to that very world which I have despised . . . . Ingratitude, contempt, and hatred, I can now suffer, for perhaps I have deserved them. When I arraigned the wisdom of Providence, I only showed my own ignorance; henceforth let me keep from vice myself, and pity it in others.'

He had scarce ended, when the Genius, assuming an air of terrible complacency, called all his thunders around him, and vanished in a whirlwind. Asem, astonished at the terror of the scene, looked for his imaginary world; when, casting his eyes around, he perceived himself in the very situation, and in the very place, where he first began to repine and despair; his right foot had been just advanced to take the fatal plunge, nor had it been yet withdrawn; so instantly did Providence strike the series of truths just imprinted on his soul. He now departed from the water-side in tranquillity, and, leaving his horrid mansion, travelled to Segestan, his native city; where he diligently applied himself to commerce, and put in practice that wisdom he had learnt in solitude. The frugality of a few years soon produced opulence; the number of his domestics increased; his friends came to him from every part of the city; nor did he receive them with disdain; and a youth of misery was concluded with an old age of elegance, affluence, and ease.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728—1774)



## VII

### A BACHELOR'S COMPLAINT.

As a single man, I have spent a good deal of my time in noting down the infirmities of Married People, to console myself for those superior pleasures, which they tell me I have lost by remaining as I am.

I cannot say that the quarrels of men and their wives ever made any great impression upon me, or had much tendency to strengthen me in those anti-social resolutions which I took up long ago upon more substantial considerations. What oftenest offends me at the houses of married persons where I visit, is an error of quite a different description,—it is that they are too loving.

Not too loving neither: that does not explain my meaning. Besides, why should that offend me? The very act of separating themselves from the rest of the world, to have the fuller enjoyment of each other's society, implies that they prefer one another to all the world.

But what I complain of is, that they carry this preference so undisguisedly, they perk it up in the faces of us single people so shamelessly, you cannot be in their company a moment without being made to feel, by some indirect hint or open avowal, that *you* are not the object of this preference. Now there are some things which give no offence, while implied or taken for granted merely; but expressed, there is much offence in them. If a man were to accost the first homely-featured or plain-dressed young woman of his acquaintance, and tell her bluntly, that she was not handsome or rich enough for him, and he could not marry her, he would deserve to be kicked for his ill-manners; yet no less is implied in the fact, that having

## CHARLES LAMB

access and opportunity of putting the question to her, he has never yet thought fit to do it. The young woman understands this as clearly as if it were put into words; but no reasonable young woman would think of making this the ground of a quarrel. Just as little right have a married couple to tell me by speeches, and looks that are scarce less than speeches, that I am not the happy man,—the lady's choice. It is enough that I know I am not: I do not want this perpetual reminding.

The display of superior knowledge or riches may be made sufficiently mortifying, but these admit of a palliative. The knowledge which is brought out to insult me, may accidentally improve me; and in the rich man's houses and pictures, his parks and gardens, I have a temporary usufruct at least. But the display of married happiness has none of these palliatives: it is throughout pure, unrecompensed, unqualified insult.

Marriage by its best title is a monopoly, and not of the least invidious sort. It is the cunning of most possessors of any exclusive privilege to keep their advantage as much out of sight as possible, that their less favoured neighbours, seeing little of the benefit, may the less be disposed to question the right. But these married monopolists thrust the most obnoxious part of their patent into our faces.

Nothing is to me more distasteful than that entire complacency and satisfaction which beam in the countenances of a new-married couple,—in that of the lady particularly: it tells you, that her lot is disposed of in this world: that you can have no hopes of her. It is true, I have none: nor wishes either, perhaps: but this is one of those truths which ought, as I said before, to be taken for granted, not expressed.

The excessive airs which those people give themselves, founded on the ignorance of us unmarried people, would be more offensive if they were less irrational. We will

allow them to understand the mysteries belonging to their own craft better than we, who have not had the happiness to be made free of the company: but their arrogance is not content within these limits. If a single person presume to offer his opinion in their presence, though upon the most indifferent subject, he is immediately silenced as an incompetent person. Nay, a young married lady of my acquaintance, who, the best of the jest was, had not changed her condition above a fortnight before, in a question on which I had the misfortune to differ from her, respecting the properest mode of breeding oysters for the London market, had the assurance to ask with a sneer, how such an old Bachelor as I could pretend to know anything about such matters!

But what I have spoken of hitherto is nothing to the airs which these creatures give themselves when they come, as they generally do, to have children. When I consider how little of a rarity children are,—that every street and blind alley swarms with them,—that the poorest people commonly have them in most abundance,—that there are few marriages that are not blest with at least one of these bargains,—how often they turn out ill, and defeat the fond hopes of their parents, taking to vicious courses, which end in poverty, disgrace, the gallows, etc.—I cannot for my life tell what cause for pride there can possibly be in having them. If they were young phoenixes, indeed, that were born but one in a year, there might be a pretext. But when they are so common—

I do not advert to the insolent merit which they assume with their husbands on these occasions. Let *them* look to that. But why *we*, who are not their natural-born subjects, should be expected to bring our spices, myrrh, and incense,—our tribute and homage of admiration,—I do not see.

“Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children;” so says the excellent office in

our Prayer-Book appointed for the churthing of women. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." So say I; but then don't let him discharge his quiver upon us that are weaponless;—let them be arrows, but not to gall and stick us. I have generally observed that these arrows are double-headed: they have two forks, to be sure to hit with one or the other. As for instance, where you come to a house which is full of children, if you happen to take no notice of them (you are thinking of something else, perhaps, and turn a deaf ear to their innocent caresses), you are set down as untractable, morose, a hater of children. On the other hand, if you find them more than usually engaging,—if you are taken with their pretty manners, and set about in earnest to romp and play with them,—some pretext or other is sure to be found for sending them out of the room; they are too noisy or boisterous, or Mr.—does not like children. With one or other of these forks the arrow is sure to hit you.

I could forgive their jealousy, and dispense with toying with their brats, if it gives them any pain; but I think it unreasonable to be called upon to *love* them, where I see no occasion,—to love a whole family, perhaps eight, nine, or ten, indiscriminately,—to love all the pretty dears, because children are so engaging!

I know there is a proverb, "Love me, love my dog:" that is not always so very practicable, particularly if the dog be set upon you to tease you or snap at you in sport. But a dog, or a lesser thing—any inanimate substance, as a keepsake, a watch or a ring, a tree, or the place where we last parted when my friend went away upon a long absence, I can make shift to love, because I love him, and anything that reminds me of him; provided it be in its nature indifferent, and apt to receive whatever hue fancy can give it. But children have a real character, and an essential being of themselves: they are amiable or unamiable *per se*; I must love or hate them as I see cause for

either in their qualities. A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly; they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do. Oh! but you will say, sure it is an attractive age,—there is something in the tender years of infancy that of itself charms us! That is the very reason why I am more nice about them. I know that a sweet child is the sweetest thing in nature, not even excepting the delicate creatures which bear them; but the prettier the kind of a thing is, the more desirable it is that it should be pretty of its kind. One daisy differs not much from another in glory; but a violet should look and smell the daintiest,—I was always rather squeamish in my women and children.

But this is not the worst: one must be admitted into their familiarity at least, before they can complain of inattention. It implies visits, and some kind of intercourse. But if the husband be a man with whom you have lived on a friendly footing before marriage—if you did not come in on the wife's side—if you did not sneak into the house in her train, but were an old friend in fast habits of intimacy before their courtship was so much as thought on,—look about you—your tenure is precarious—before a twelvemonth shall roll over your head, you shall find your old friend gradually grow cool and altered towards you, and at last seek opportunities of breaking with you. I have scarce a married friend of my acquaintance, upon whose firm faith I can rely, whose friendship did not commence *after the period of his marriage*. With some limitations, they can endure that; but that the good man should have dared to enter into a solemn league of friendship in which they were not consulted, though it happened before they knew him,—before they that are now man and wife ever met,—this is intolerable to them. Every long friendship, every old authentic intimacy, must

be brought into their office to be new stamped with their currency, as a sovereign prince calls in the good old money that was coined in some reign before he was born or thought of, to be new marked and minted with the stamp of his authority, before he will let it pass current in the world. You may guess what luck generally befalls such a rusty piece of metal as I am in these *new mintings*.

Innumerable are the ways which they take to insult and worm you out of their husband's confidence. Laughing at all you say with a kind of wonder, as if you were a queer kind of fellow that said good things, *but an oddity*, is one of the ways;—they have a particular kind of stare for the purpose;—till at last the husband, who used to defer to your judgment, and would pass over some excrescences of understanding and manner for the sake of a general vein of observation (not quite vulgar) which he perceived in you, begins to suspect whether you are not altogether a humorist,—a fellow well enough to have consorted with in his bachelor days, but not quite so proper to be introduced to ladies. This may be called the staring way; and is that which has oftenest been put in practice against me.

Then there is the exaggerating way, or the way of irony; that is, where they find you an object of especial regard with their husband, who is not so easily to be shaken from the lasting attachment founded on esteem which he has conceived towards you, by never qualified exaggerations to cry up all that you say or do, till the good man, who understands well enough that it is all done in compliment to him, grows weary of the debt of gratitude which is due to so much candour, and by relaxing a little on his part, and taking down a peg or two in his enthusiasm, sinks at length to the kindly level of moderate esteem—that “decent affection and complacent kindness” towards you, where she herself can join in sympathy with him without much stretch and violence to her sincerity.

Another way (for the ways they have to accomplish

so desirable a purpose are infinite) is, with a kind of innocent simplicity, continually to mistake what it was, which first made their husband fond of you. If an esteem for something excellent in your moral character was that which riveted the chain which she is to break, upon any imaginary discovery of a want of poignancy in your conversation, she will cry, "I thought, my dear, you described your friend, Mr.—, as a great wit." If, on the other hand, it was for some supposed charm in your conversation that he first grew to like you, and was content for this to overlook some trifling irregularities in your moral deportment, upon the first notice of any of these she as readily exclaims, "This, my dear, is your good Mr.—!" One good lady whom I took the liberty of expostulating with for not showing me quite so much respect as I thought due to her husband's old friend, had the candour to confess to me that she had often heard Mr.—speak of me before marriage, and that she had conceived a great desire to be acquainted with me, but that the sight of me had very much disappointed her expectations; for, from her husband's representations of me, she had formed a notion that she was to see a fine, tall, officer-like looking man (I use her very words), the very reverse of which proved to be the truth. This was candid; and I had the civility not to ask her in return, how she came to pitch upon a standard of personal accomplishments for her husband's friends which differed so much from his own; for my friend's dimensions as near as possible approximate to mine; he standing five feet five in his shoes, in which I have the advantage of him by about half an inch; and he no more than myself exhibiting any indications of a martial character in his air or countenance.

These are some of the mortifications which I have encountered in the absurd attempt to visit at their houses. To enumerate them all would be a vain endeavour; I shall therefore just glance at the very common impropriety of

which married ladies are guilty,—of treating us as if we were their husbands, and *vice versa*. I mean, when they use us with familiarity, and their husbands with ceremony. *Testacea*, for instance, kept me the other night two or three hours beyond my usual time of supping while she was fretting because Mr.—did not come home, till the oysters were all spoiled, rather than she would be guilty of the impoliteness of touching one in his absence. This was reversing the point of good manners; for ceremony is an invention to take off the uneasy feeling which we derive from knowing ourselves to be less the object of love and esteem with a fellow-creature than some other person is. It endeavours to make up, by superior attentions in little points, for that invidious preference which it is forced to deny in the greater.. Had *Testacea* kept the oysters back for me, and withstood her husband's importunities to go to supper, she would have acted according to the strict rules of propriety. I know no ceremony that ladies are bound to observe to their husbands, beyond the point of a modest behaviour and decorum: therefore I must protest against the vicarious gluttony of *Cerasia*, who at her own table sent away a dish of Morellas, which I was applying to with great good will, to her husband at the other end of the table, and recommended a plate of less extraordinary gooseberries to my unwedded palate in their stead. Neither can I excuse the wanton affront of—

But I am weary of stringing up all my married acquaintance by Roman denominations. Let them amend and change their manners, or I promise to record the full-length English of their names, to the terror of all such desperate offenders in future.



## VIII

### ON GETTING UP ON COLD MORNINGS

An Italian author—Giulio Cordara, a Jesuit—has written a poem upon insects, which he begins by insisting that those troublesome and abominable little animals were created for our annoyance, and that they were certainly not inhabitants of Paradise. We of the north may dispute this piece of theology; but on the other hand it is as clear as the snow on the house-tops that Adam was not under the necessity of shaving; and that when Eve walked out of her delicious bower she did not step upon ice three inches thick.

Some people say it is a very easy thing to get up on a cold morning. You have only, they tell you, to take the resolution; and the thing is done. This may be very true; just as a boy at school has only to take a flogging, and the thing is over. But we have not at all made up our minds upon it; and we find it a very pleasant exercise to discuss the matter, candidly, before we get up. This, at least, is not idling, though it may be lying. It affords an excellent answer to those who ask how lying in bed can be indulged in by a reasoning being—a rational creature. How? Why, with the argument calmly at work in one's head, and the clothes over one's shoulder. Oh—it is a fine way of spending a sensible, impartial half-hour.

If these people would be more charitable they would get on with their argument better. But they are apt to reason so ill, and to assert so dogmatically, that one could wish to have them round one's bed, of a bitter morning, and *lie* before their faces. They ought to hear both sides

of the bed, the inside and out. If they cannot entertain themselves with their own thoughts for half an hour or so, it is not the fault of those who can.

Candid inquiries into one's decumbency, besides the greater or less privileges to be allowed a man in proportion to his ability of keeping early hours, the work given his faculties, &c., will at least concede their due merits to such representations as the following. In the first place, says the injured but calm appealer, I have been warm all night, and find my system in a state perfectly suitable to a warm-blooded animal. To get out of this state into the cold, besides the inharmonious and uncritical abruptness of the transition, is so unnatural to such a creature, that the poets, refining upon the tortures of the damned, make one of their greatest agonies consist in being suddenly transported from heat to cold—from fire to ice. They are 'haled' out<sup>t</sup> of their 'beds,' says Milton, by 'harpy-footed furies'—fellows who come to call them. On my first movement towards the anticipation of getting up I find that such parts of the sheets and bolster as are exposed to the air of the room are stone-cold. On opening my eyes, the first thing that meets them is my own breath rolling forth, as if in the open air, like smoke out of a chimney. Think of this symptom. Then I turn my eyes sideways and see the window all frozen over. Think of that. Then the servant comes in. 'It is very cold this morning, is it not?'—'Very cold, sir.'—'Very cold indeed, isn't it?'—'Very cold indeed, sir.'—'More than usually so, isn't it, even for this weather?' (Here the servant's wit and good-nature are put to a considerable test, and the inquirer lies on thorns for the answer.) 'Why, sir . . . I think it is.' (Good creature! There is not a better or more truth-telling servant going.) 'I must rise, however—get me some warm water.' Here comes a fine interval between the departure of the servant and the arrival of the hot water; during which, of course, it is of 'no use' to get up. The hot water comes. 'Is it

quite hot?'—'Yes, sir.'—'Perhaps too hot for shaving; I must wait a little?'—'No, sir; it will just do.' (There is an over-nice propriety sometimes, an officious zeal of virtue, a little troublesome.) 'Oh—the shirt—you must air my clean shirt; linen gets very damp this weather.'—'Yes, sir.' Here another delicious five minutes. A knock at the door. 'Oh, the shirt—very well. My stockings—I think the stockings had better be aired too.'—'Very well, sir.' Here another interval. At length everything is ready, except myself. I now, continues our incumbent (a happy word, by the by, for the country vicar)—I now cannot help thinking a good deal—who can?—upon the unnecessary and villainous custom of shaving: it is a thing so unmanly (here I nestle closer)—so effeminate (here I recoil from an unlucky step into the colder part of the bed). No wonder that the Queen of France took part with the rebels against that degenerate king, her husband, who first affronted her smooth visage with a face like her own. The Emperor Julian never showed the luxuriancy of his genius to better advantage than in reviving the flowing beard. Look at Cardinal Bembo's picture—at Michaelangelo's—at Titian's—at Shakespeare's—at Fletcher's—at Spenser's—at Chaucer's—at Alfred's—at Plato's—I could name a great man for every tick of my watch. Look at the Turks, a grave and otiose people. Think of Haroun Al Raschid and Bedreddin Hassan. Think of Wortley Montagu, the worthy son of his mother, above the prejudice of his time. Look at the Persian gentlemen, whom one is ashamed of meeting about the suburbs, their dress and appearance are so much finer than our own. Lastly, think of the razor itself—how totally opposed to every sensation of bed—how cold, how edgy, how hard! how utterly different from anything like the warm and circling amplitude, which  
Sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

Add to this—benumbed fingers, which may help you to cut yourself, a quivering body, a frozen towel, and a ewer full of ice; and he that says there is nothing to oppose in all this, only shows that he has no merit in opposing it.

Thomson the poet, who exclaims in his *Seasons*—

Falsely luxurious! Will not man awake?  
used to lie in bed till noon, because he said he had no motive in getting up. He could imagine the good of rising; but then he could also imagine the good of lying still; and his exclamation, it must be allowed, was made upon the summer-time, not winter. We must proportion the argument to the individual character. A money-getter may be drawn out of his bed by three or four pence; but this will not suffice for a student. A proud man may say, 'What shall I think of myself, if I don't get up?' but the more humble one will be content to waive this prodigious notion of himself, out of respect to his kindly bed. The mechanical man shall get up without any ado at all; and so shall the barometer. An ingenious liar in bed will find hard matter of discussion even on the score of health and longevity. He will ask us for our proofs and precedents of the ill effects of lying later in cold weather; and sophisticate much on the advantages of an even temperature of body; of the natural propensity (pretty universal) to have one's way; and of the animals that roll themselves up and sleep all the winter. As to longevity, he will ask whether the longest is of necessity the best; and whether Holborn is the handsomest street in London.

LEIGH HUNT. (1784—1859)

## XI

### ON GOING A JOURNEY

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going on journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

‘The fields his study, nature was his book.’

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedge-rows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer inconveniences. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

‘———a friend in my retreat,

Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go on a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

“May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,

That in the various bustle of resort

Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair’d,”

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange

good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. ( Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.) From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that waits him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like 'sunken wrack and sumless treasures,' burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull common-places, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. 'Leave, oh, leave me to my repose'! I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me 'very stuff of the conscience.' Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. 'Out upon such half-faced fellowship,' say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased

with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that 'he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time.' So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. 'Let me have a companion of my way,' says Sterne, 'were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines.' It is beautifully said: but in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature, without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. (I am for the synthetical method on a journey, in preference to the analytical.) I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that

you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company, seems extravagance or affectation; and on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task to which few are competent. We must ‘give it an understanding, but no tongue.’

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In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects: it should be reserved for Table-talk. L—is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of night-fall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to ‘take one’s ease at one’s inn!’ These eventful moments in our lives’ history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea,

‘The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,’  
and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit consider-



ing what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rashei,  
rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet!

\* \* \* \*

There is hardly any thing that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the horizon that shuts it from our sight, also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild barren country, I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. 'Beyond Hyde Park,' says Sir Fopling Flutter, 'all is a desert.' All that part of the map that we do not see before us is a blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, lands to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population, known by the name of China, to us? An inch of paste-board on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange!

Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our own being only piece-meal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot, as it were, unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived and with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names, that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten!

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WILLIAM HAZLITT. (1778--1822)

## X

### TRAVEL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The subjects of Charles the Second were not, it is true, quite unacquainted with that principle which has, in our own time, produced an unprecedented revolution in human affairs, which has enabled navies to advance in the face of wind and tide, and battalions, attended by all their baggage and artillery, to traverse kingdoms at a pace equal to that of the fleetest race horse. The Marquess of Worcester had recently observed the expansive power of moisture rarefied by heat. After many experiments he had succeeded in constructing a rude steam engine, which he called a fire water work, and which he pronounced to be an admirable and most forcible instrument of propulsion. But the Marquess was suspected to be a madman, and known to be a Papist. His inventions, therefore, found no favourable reception. His fire water work might, perhaps, furnish matter for conversation at a meeting of the Royal Society, but was not applied to any practical purpose. There were no railways, except a few made of timber, from the mouths of the Northumbrian coal pits to the banks of the Tyne. There was very little internal communication by water. A few attempts had been made to deepen and embank the natural streams, but with slender success. Hardly a single navigable canal had been even projected. The English of that day were in the habit of talking with mingled admiration and despair of the immense trench by which Lewis the Fourteenth had made a junction between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. They little thought that their country would, in the course of a

few generations, be intersected, at the cost of private adventurers, by artificial rivers making up more than four times the length of the Thames, the Severn, and the Trent together.

It was by the highways that both travellers and goods generally passed from place to place. And those highways appear to have been far worse than might have been expected from the degree of wealth and civilisation which the nation had even then attained. On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the descents precipitous, and the way often such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dusk, from the uninclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides. Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, was in danger of losing his way on the great North road, between Barnby Moor and Tuxford, and actually lost his way between Doncaster and York. Pepys and his wife, travelling in their own coach, lost their way between Newbury and Reading. In the course of the same tour they lost their way near Salisbury, and were in danger of having to pass the night on the plain. It was only in fine weather that the whole breadth of the road was available for wheeled vehicles. Often the mud lay deep on the right and the left; and only a narrow track of firm ground rose above the quagmire. At such times obstructions and quarrels were frequent, and the path was sometimes blocked up during a long time by carriers, neither of whom would break the way. It happened, almost every day, that coaches stuck fast, until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighbouring farm, to tug them out of the slough. But in bad seasons the traveller had to encounter inconveniences still more serious. Thoresby, who was in the habit of travelling between Leeds and the capital, has recorded, in his Diary, such a series of perils and disasters as might suffice for a journey to the Frozen Ocean or to the Desert of Sahara. On one occasion he learned that the floods were out between Ware

and London, that passengers had to swim for their lives, and that a higgler had perished in the attempt to cross. In consequence of these tidings he turned out of the high road, and was conducted across some meadows, where it was necessary for him to ride to the saddle skirts in water. In the course of another journey he narrowly escaped being swept away by an inundation of the Trent. He was afterwards detained at Stamford four days, on account of the state of the roads, and then ventured to proceed only because fourteen members of the House of Commons, who were going up in a body to Parliament, with guides and numerous attendants, took him into their company. On the roads of Derbyshire travellers were in constant fear for their necks, and were frequently compelled to alight and lead their beasts. The great route through Wales to Holyhead was in such a state that, in 1685, a viceroy, going to Ireland, was five hours in travelling fourteen miles, from St. Asaph to Conway. Between Conway and Beaumaris he was forced to walk great part of the way; and his lady was carried in a litter. His coach was, with great difficulty, and by the help of many hands, brought after him entire. In general, carriages were taken to pieces at Conway, and borne, on the shoulders of stout Welsh peasants, to the Menai Straits. In some parts of Kent and Sussex none but the strongest horses could, in winter, get through the bog, in which, at every step, they sank deep. The markets were often inaccessible during several months. It is said that the fruits of the earth were sometimes suffered to rot in one place, while in another place, distant only a few miles, the supply fell far short of the demand. The wheeled carriages were, in this district, generally pulled by oxen. When Prince George of Denmark visited the stately mansion of Petworth in wet weather, he was six hours in going nine miles; and it was necessary that a body of sturdy hinds should be on each side of his coach, in order

to prop it. Of the carriages which conveyed his retinue several were upset and injured. A letter from one of his gentlemen in waiting has been preserved, in which the unfortunate courtier complains that, during fourteen hours, he never once alighted, except when his coach was overturned or stuck fast in the mud.

One chief cause of the badness of the roads seems to have been the defective state of the law. Every parish was bound to repair the highways which passed through it. The peasantry were forced to give their gratuitous labour six days in the year. If this was not sufficient hired labour was employed, and the expense was met by a parochial rate. That a route connecting two great towns, which have a large and thriving trade with each other, should be maintained at the cost of the rural population scattered between them is obviously unjust; and this injustice was peculiarly glaring in the case of the great North road, which traversed very poor and thinly inhabited districts, and joined very rich and populous districts. Indeed it was not in the power of the parishes of Huntingdonshire to mend a highway worn by the constant traffic between the West Riding of Yorkshire and London. Soon after the Restoration this grievance attracted the notice of Parliament; and an Act, the first of our many turnpike Acts, was passed, imposing a small toll on travellers and goods, for the purpose of keeping some parts of this important line of communication in good repair. This innovation, however, excited many murmurs; and the other great avenues to the capital were long left under the old system. A change was at length effected, but not without much difficulty. For unjust and absurd taxation to which men are accustomed is often borne far more willingly than the most reasonable impost which is new. It was not till many toll bars had been violently pulled down, till the troops had in many districts been forced to act against the people, and till much blood

had been shed, that a good system was introduced. By slow degrees reason triumphed over prejudice; and our island is now crossed in every direction by near thirty thousand miles of turnpike road.

On the best highways heavy articles were, in the time of Charles the Second, generally conveyed from place to place by stage waggons. In the straw of these vehicles nestled a crowd of passengers, who could not afford to travel by coach or on horseback, and who were prevented by infirmity, or by the weight of their luggage, from going on foot. The expense of transmitting heavy goods in this way was enormous. From London to Birmingham the charge was seven pounds a ton; from London to Exeter twelve pounds a ton. This was about fifteen pence a ton for every mile, more by a third than was afterwards charged on turnpike roads, and fifteen times what is now demanded by railway companies. The cost of conveyance amounted to a prohibitory tax on many useful articles. Coal in particular was never seen except in the districts where it was produced, or in the districts to which it could be carried by sea, and was indeed always known in the South of England by the name of sea coal.

On by-roads, and generally throughout the country north of York and west of Exeter, goods were carried by long trains of packhorses. These strong and patient beasts, the breed of which is now extinct, were attended by a class of men who seem to have borne much resemblance to the Spanish muleteers. A traveller of humble condition often found it convenient to perform a journey mounted on a packsaddle between two baskets, under the care of these hardy guides. The expense of this mode of conveyance was small. But the caravan moved at a foot's pace; and in winter the cold was often insupportable.

The rich commonly travelled in their own carriages, with at least four horses. Cotton, the facetious poet, attempted to go from London to the Peak with a single

pair, but found at Saint Albans that the journey would be insupportably tedious, and altered his plan. A coach and six is in our time never seen, except as part of some pageant. The frequent mention therefore of such equipages in old books is likely to mislead us. We attribute to magnificence what was really the effect of a very disagreeable necessity. People, in the time of Charles the Second, travelled with six horses, because with a smaller number there was great danger of sticking fast in the mire. Nor were even six horses always sufficient. Vanbrugh, in the succeeding generation, described with great humour the way in which a country gentleman, newly chosen a member of Parliament, went up to London. On that occasion all the exertions of six beasts, two of which had been taken from the plough, could not save the family coach from being imbedded in a quagmire.'

Public carriages had recently been much improved. During the years which immediately followed the Restoration, a diligence ran between London and Oxford in two days. The passengers slept at Beaconsfield. At length, in the spring of 1669, a great and daring innovation was attempted. It was announced that a vehicle, described as the Flying Coach, would perform the whole journey between sunrise and sunset. This spirited undertaking was solemnly considered and sanctioned by the Heads of the University, and appears to have excited the same sort of interest which is excited in our own time by the opening of a new railway. The vice-chancellor, by a notice affixed in all public places, prescribed the hour and place of departure. The success of the experiment was complete. At six in the morning the carriage began to move from before the ancient front of All Souls College; and at seven in the evening the adventurous gentlemen who had run the first risk were safely deposited at their inn in London. The emulation of the sister University was moved; and soon a diligence was set up which in one day



carried passengers from Canbridge to the capital. At the close of the reign of Charles the Second, flying carriages ran thrice a week from London to the chief towns. But no stage coach, indeed no stage waggon, appears to have proceeded further north than York, or further west than Exeter. The ordinary day's journey of a flying coach was about fifty miles in the summer; but in winter, when the ways were bad and the nights long, little more than thirty. The Chester coach, the York coach, and the Exeter coach generally reached London in four days during the fine season, but at Christmas not till the sixth day. The passengers, six in number, were all seated in the carriage. For accidents were so frequent that it would have been most perilous to mount the roof. The ordinary fare was about two pence halfpenny a mile in summer, and somewhat more in winter.

This mode of travelling, which by Englishmen of the present day would be regarded as insufferably slow, seemed to our ancestors wonderfully and indeed alarmingly rapid. In a work published a few months before the death of Charles the Second, the flying coaches are extolled as far superior to any similar vehicles ever known in the world. Their velocity is the subject of special commendation, and is triumphantly contrasted with the sluggish pace of the continental posts. But with boasts like these was mingled the sound of complaint and invective. The interest of large classes had been unfavourably affected by the establishment of the new diligence; and, as usual, many persons were, from mere stupidity and obstinacy, disposed to clamour against the innovation, simply because it was an innovation. It was vehemently argued that this mode of conveyance would be fatal to the breed of horses and to the noble art of horsemanship; that the Thames, which had long been an important nursery of seamen, would cease to be the chief thoroughfare from London up to Windsor and down to Gravesend; that saddlers and

spurriers would be ruined by hundreds; that numerous inns, at which mounted travellers had been in the habit of stopping, would be deserted, and would no longer pay any rent; that the new carriages were too hot in summer and too cold in winter; that the passengers were grievously annoyed by invalids and crying children; that the coach sometimes reached the inn so late that it was impossible to get supper, and sometimes started so early that it was impossible to get breakfast. On these grounds it was gravely recommended that no public carriage should be permitted to have more than four horses, to start oftener than once a week, or to go more than thirty miles a day. It was hoped that, if this regulation were adopted, all except the sick and the lame would return to the old mode of travelling. Petitions embodying such opinions as these were presented to the King in Council from several companies of the City of London, from several provincial towns, and from the justices of several counties. We smile at these things. It is not impossible that our descendants, when they read the history of the opposition offered by cupidity and prejudice to the improvement of the nineteenth century, may smile in their turn.

In spite of the attractions of the flying coaches, it was still usual for men who enjoyed health and vigour, and who were not encumbered by much baggage, to perform long journeys on horseback. If the traveller wished to move expeditiously he rode post. Fresh saddle horses and guides were to be procured at convenient distances along all the great lines of road. The charge was three pence a mile for each horse, and four pence a stage for the guide. In this manner, when the ways were good, it was possible to travel, for a considerable time, as rapidly as by any conveyance known in England, till vehicles were propelled by steam. There were as yet no post chaises; nor could those who rode in their own coaches ordinarily procure a change of horses. The king, however, and the great offi-

cers of state were able to command relays. Thus Charles commonly went in one day from Whitehall to Newmarket, a distance of about fifty-five miles through a level country; and this was thought by his subjects a proof of great activity. Evelyn performed the same journey in company with the Lord Treasurer Clifford. The coach was drawn by six horses, which were changed at Bishop Stortford and again at Chesterford. The travellers reached Newmarket at night. Such a mode of conveyance seems to have been considered as a rare luxury confined to princes and ministers.

Whatever might be the way in which a journey was performed, the travellers, unless they were numerous and well armed, ran considerable risk of being stopped and plundered. The mounted highwayman, a marauder known to our generation only from books, was to be found on every main road. The waste tracts which lay on the great routes near London were especially haunted by plunderers of this class. Hounslow Heath, on the great Western Road, and Finchley Common, on the great Northern Road, were perhaps the most celebrated of these spots. The Cambridge scholars trembled when they approached Epping Forest, even in broad daylight. Seamen who had just been paid off at Chatham were often compelled to deliver their purses on Gadshill, celebrated near a hundred years earlier by the greatest of poets as the scene of the depredations of Poina and Falstaff. The public authorities seem to have been often at a loss how to deal with the plunderers. At one time it was announced in the Gazette that several persons, who were strongly suspected of being highwaymen, but against whom there was not sufficient evidence, would be paraded at Newgate in riding dresses: their horses would also be shown: and all gentlemen who had been robbed were invited to inspect this singular exhibition. On another occasion a pardon was publicly offered to a robber if he would give up some rough

diamonds, of immense value, which he had taken when he stopped the Harwich mail. A short time after appeared another proclamation, warning the innkeepers that the eye of the government was upon them. Their criminal connivance, it was affirmed, enabled banditti to infest the roads with impunity. That these suspicions were not without foundation, is proved by the dying speeches of some penitent robbers of that age, who appear to have received from the innkeepers' services much resembling those which Farquhar's Boniface rendered to Gibbet.

It was necessary to the success and even to the safety of the highwayman that he should be a bold and skilful rider, and that his manners and appearance should be such as suited the master of a fine horse. He therefore held an aristocratical position in the community of thieves, appeared at fashionable coffee houses and gaming houses, and betted with men of quality on the race ground. Sometimes, indeed, he was a man of good family and education. A romantic interest therefore attached, and perhaps still attaches, to the names of freebooters of this class. The vulgar eagerly drank in tales of their ferocity and audacity, of their occasional acts of generosity and good nature, of their amours, of their miraculous escapes, of their desperate struggles, and of their manly bearing at the bar and in the cart. Thus it was related of William Nevison, the great robber of Yorkshire, that he levied a quarterly tribute on all the northern drovers, and, in return, not only spared them himself, but protected them against all other thieves; that he demanded purses in the most courteous manner; that he gave largely to the poor what he had taken from the rich; that his life was once spared by the royal clemency, but that he again tempted his fate, and at length died, in 1685, on the gallows of York. It was related how Claude Duval, the French page of the Duke of Richmond, took to the road, became captain of a formidable gang, and had the honour to be

named first in a royal proclamation against notorious offenders; how at the head of his troop he stopped a lady's coach, in which there was a booty of four hundred pounds; how he took only one hundred, and suffered the fair owner to ransom the rest by dancing a coranto with him on the heath; how his vivacious gallantry stole away the hearts of all women; how his dexterity at sword and pistol made him a terror to all men; how, at length, in the year 1670, he was seized when overcome by wine; how dames of high rank visited him in prison, and with tears interceded for his life; how the King would have granted a pardon, but for the interference of Judge Morton, the terror of highwaymen, who threatened to resign his office unless the law were carried into full effect; and how, after the execution, the corpse lay in state with all the pomp of scutcheons, wax lights, black hangings and mutes, till the same cruel Judge, who had intercepted the mercy of the crown, sent officers to disturb the obsequies. In these anecdotes there is doubtless a large mixture of fable; but they are not on that account unworthy of being recorded; for it is both an authentic and an important fact that such tales, whether false or true, were heard by our ancestors with eagerness and faith.

All the various dangers by which the traveller was beset were greatly increased by darkness. He was therefore commonly desirous of having the shelter of a roof during the night; and such shelter it was not difficult to obtain. From a very early period the inns of England had been renowned. Our first great poet had described the excellent accommodation which they afforded to the pilgrims of the fourteenth century. Nine and twenty persons, with their horses, found room in the wide chambers and stables of the Tabard in Southwark. The food was of the best, and the wines such as drew the company on to drink largely. Two hundred years later, under the reign of Elizabeth, William Harrison gave a lively des-

cription of the plenty and comfort of the great hostleries. The continent of Europe, he said, could show nothing like them. There were some in which two or three hundred people, with their horses, could without difficulty be lodged and fed. The bedding, the tapestry, above all, the abundance of clean and fine linen, was matter of wonder. Valuable plate was often set on the tables. Nay, there were signs which had cost thirty or forty pounds. In the seventeenth century England abounded with excellent inns of every rank. The traveller sometimes, in a small village, lighted on a public house such as Walton has described, where the brick floor was swept clean, where the walls were stuck round with ballads, where the sheets smelt of lavender, and where a blazing fire, a cup of good ale, and a dish of trouts fresh from the neighbouring brook, were to be procured at small charge. At the larger houses of entertainment were to be found beds hung with silk, choice cookery, and claret equal to the best which was drunk in London. The innkeepers too, it was said, were not like other innkeepers. On the continent the landlord was the tyrant of those who crossed the threshold. In England he was a servant. Never was an Englishman more at home than when he took his ease in his inn. Even men of fortune, who might in their own mansions have enjoyed every luxury, were often in the habit of passing their evenings in the parlour of some neighbouring house of public entertainment. They seem to have thought that comfort and freedom could in no other place be enjoyed in equal perfection. This feeling continued during many generations to be a national peculiarity. The liberty and jollity of inns long furnished matter to our novelists and dramatists. Johnson declared that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity; and Shenstone gently complained that no private roof, however friendly, gave the wanderer so warm a welcome as that which was to be found at an inn.

LORD MACAULAY. (1800—1859)

# CHRISTMAS

~ 'But is old, old, good old Christmas gone? Nothing but the hair of his good, gray, old head and beard left? Well, I will have that, seeing I cannot have more of him—HUE AND CRY AFTER CHRISTMAS

A man might then behold  
 At Christmas, in each hall  
 Good fires to curb the cold,  
 And meat for great and small.  
 The neighbours were friendly bidden,  
 And all had welcome true,  
 The poor from the gates were not chidden,  
 When this old cap was new.—OLD SONG

NOTHING in England exercises a more delightful spell over my imagination, than the lingerings of the holiday customs and rural games of former times. They recall the pictures my fancy used to draw in the May morning of life, when as yet I only knew the world through books, and believed it to be all that poets had painted it; and they bring with them the flavour of those honest days of yore, in which, perhaps, with equal fallacy, I am apt to think the world was more homebred, social, and joyous than at present. I regret to say that they are daily growing more and more faint, being gradually worn away by time, but still more obliterated by modern fashion. They resemble those picturesque morsels of Gothic architecture, which we see crumbling in various parts of the country, partly dilapidated by the waste of ages, and partly lost in the additions and alterations of latter days. Poetry, however, clings with cherishing fondness about the rural game and

holiday revel, from which it has derived so many of its themes—as the ivy winds its rich foliage about the Gothic arch and mouldering tower, gratefully repaying their support, by clasping together their tottering remains, and, as it were, embalming them in verdure.

Of all the old festivals, however, that of Christmas awakens the strongest and most heartfelt associations. There is a tone of solemn and sacred feeling that blends with our conviviality, and lifts the spirit to a state of hallowed and elevated enjoyment. The services of the church about this season are extremely tender and inspiring. They dwell on the beautiful story of the origin of our faith, and the pastoral scenes that accompanied its announcement. They gradually increase in fervour and pathos during the season of Advent, until they break forth in full jubilee on the morning that brought peace and goodwill to men. I do not know a grander effect of music on the moral feelings, than to hear the full choir and the pealing organ performing a Christmas anthem in a cathedral, and filling every part of the vast pile with triumphant harmony.

It is a beautiful arrangement, also, derived from days of yore, that this festival, which commemorates the announcement of the religion of peace and love, has been made the season of gathering together of family connections, and drawing closer again those bands of kindred hearts, which the cares and pleasures and sorrows of the world are continually operating to cast loose: of calling back the children of a family, who have launched forth in life, and wandered widely asunder, once more to assemble about the paternal hearth, that rallying-place of the affections, there to grow young and loving again among the endearing mementoes of childhood.

There is something in the very season of the year that gives a charm to the festivity of Christmas. At other times we derive a great portion of our pleasure from the



mere beauties of nature. Our feelings sally forth and dissipate themselves over the sunny landscape, and we "live abroad and everywhere." The song of the bird, the murmur of the stream, the breathing fragrance of spring, the soft voluptuousness of summer, the golden pomp of autumn; earth with its mantle of refreshing green, and heaven with its deep delicious blue and its cloudy magnificence, all fill us with mute but exquisite delight, and we revel in the luxury of mere sensation. But in the depth of winter, when nature lies despoiled of every charm, and wrapped in her shroud of sheeted snow, we turn for our gratifications to moral sources. The dreariness and desolation of the landscape, the short gloomy days and darksome nights, while they circumscribe our wanderings, shut in our feelings also from rambling abroad, and make us more keenly disposed for the pleasure of the social circle. Our thoughts are more concentrated: our friendly sympathies more aroused. We feel more sensibly the charm of each other's society, and are brought more closely together by dependence on each other for enjoyment. Heart calleth unto heart; and we draw our pleasures from the deep wells of loving-kindness, which lie in the quiet recesses of our bosoms; and which, when resorted to, furnish forth the pure element of domestic felicity.

The pitchy gloom without makes the heart dilate on entering the room filled with the glow and warmth of the evening fire. The ruddy blaze diffuses an artificial summer and sunshine through the room, and lights up each countenance in a kindlier welcome. Where does the honest face of hospitality expand into a broader and more cordial smile—where is the shy glance of love more sweetly eloquent—than by the winter fireside? and as the hollow blast of wintry wind rushes through the hall, claps the distant door, whistles about the casement, and rumbles down the chimney, what can be more grateful

than that feeling of sober and sheltered security, with which we look round upon the comfortable chamber and the scene of domestic hilarity?

The English, from the great prevalence of rural habit throughout every class of society, have always been fond of those festivals and holidays which agreeably interrupt the stillness of country life; and they were, in former days, particularly observant of the religious and social rites of Christmas. It is inspiring to read even the dry details which some antiquaries have given of the quaint humours, the burlesque pageants, the complete abandonment to mirth and good-fellowship, with which this festival was celebrated. It seemed to throw open every door, and unlock every heart. It brought the peasant and the peer together, and blended all ranks in one warm generous flow of joy and kindness. The old halls of castles and manor-houses resounded with the harp and the Christmas carol, and their ample boards groaned under the weight of hospitality. Even the poorest cottage welcomed the festive season with green decorations of bay and holly—the cheerful fire glanced its rays through the lattice, inviting the passengers to raise the latch, and join the gossip knot huddled round the hearth, beguiling the long evening with legendary jokes and oft-told Christmas tales.

One of the least pleasing effects of modern refinement is the havoc it has made among the hearty old holiday customs. It has completely taken off the sharp touchings and spirited reliefs of these embellishments of life, and has worn down society into a more smooth and polished, but certainly a less characteristic, surface. Many of the games and ceremonials of Christmas have entirely disappeared, and, like the sherris-sack of old Falstaff, are become matters of speculation and dispute among commentators. They flourished in times full of spirit and lustihood, when men enjoyed life roughly, but heartily and

vigorously; times wild and picturesque, which have furnished poetry with its richest materials, and the drama with its most attractive variety of characters and manners. The world has become more worldly. There is more of dissipation and less of enjoyment. Pleasure has expanded into a broader, but a shallower stream; and has forsaken many of those deep and quiet channels where it flowed sweetly through the calm bosom of domestic life. Society has acquired a more enlightened and elegant tone; but it has lost many of its strong local peculiarities, its home-bred feelings, its honest fireside delights. The traditionary customs of golden-hearted antiquity, its feudal hospitalities, and lordly wassailings, have passed away with the baronial castles and stately manor-houses in which they were celebrated. They comported with the shadowy hall, the great oaken gallery, and the tapestried parlour, but are unfitted to the light showy saloons and gay drawing-rooms of the modern villa.

Shorn, however, as it is of its ancient and festive honours, Christmas is still a period of delightful excitement in England. It is gratifying to see that home feeling completely aroused which holds so powerful a place in every English bosom. The preparations making on every side for the social board that is again to unite friends and kindred; the presents of good cheer passing and repassing, those tokens of regard, and quickeners of kind feelings; the evergreens distributed about houses and churches, emblems of peace and gladness: all these have the most pleasing effect in producing fond associations, and kindling benevolent sympathies. Even the sound of the Waits, rude as may be their minstrelsy, breaks upon the mid-watches of a winter night with the effect of perfect harmony. As I have been awakened by them in that still and solemn hour, "when deep sleep falleth upon man," I have listened with a hushed delight, and, connecting them

with the sacred and joyous occasion, have almost fancied them into another celestial choir, announcing peace and good-will to mankind.

How delightfully the imagination, when wrought upon by these moral influences, turns everything to melody and beauty! The very crowing of the cock, heard sometimes in the profound repose of the country, "telling the night watches to his feathery dames," was thought by the common people to announce the approach of this sacred festival:—

"Some say that ever 'gainst the season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
This bird of dawning singeth all night long;  
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;  
The nights are wholesome—then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm.  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

Amidst the general call to happiness, the bustle of the spirits, and stir of the affections, which prevail at this period, what bosom can remain insensible? It is, indeed, the season of regenerated feeling—the season for kindling, not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flame of charity in the heart.

The scene of early love again rises green to memory beyond the sterile waste of years; and the idea of home, fraught with the fragrance of home-dwelling joys, reanimates the drooping spirit; as the Arabian breeze will sometimes waft the freshness of the distant fields to the weary pilgrim of the desert.

Stranger and sojourner as I am in the land—though for me no social hearth may blaze, no hospitable roof throw open its doors, nor the warm grasp of friendship welcome me at the threshold—yet I feel the influence of the season beaming into my soul from the happy looks of those around me. Surely happiness is reflective, like the light of heaven; and every countenance, bright with smiles, and glowing

with innocent enjoyment, is a mirror transmitting to others the rays of a supreme and evershining benevolence. He who can turn churlishly away from contemplating the felicity of his fellow-beings, and can sit down darkling and repining in his loneliness when all around is joyful, may have his moments of strong excitement and selfish gratification, but he wants the genial and social sympathies which constitute the charm of a merry Christmas.

WASHINGTON IRVING. (1783 —1859)

## XII

### NIL NISI BONUM.

Almost the last words which Sir Walter spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were, 'Be a good man, my dear!' and with the last flicker of breath on his dying lips, he sighed a farewell to his family and passed away blessing them.

Two men, famous, admired, beloved, have just left us, the Goldsmith and the Gibbon of our time. Ere a few weeks are over, many a critic's pen will be at work, reviewing their lives, and passing judgment on their works. This is no review, or history, or criticism: only a word in testimony of respect and regard from a man of letters, who owes to his own professional labour the honour of becoming acquainted with these two eminent literary men. One was the first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. He was born almost with the republic; the *pater patriae* had laid his hand on the child's head. He bore Washington's name: he came amongst us bringing the kindest sympathy, the most artless, smiling goodwill. His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his own person, a gentleman, who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet; and, socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans. If Irving's welcome in England was a kind one, was it not also grateful remembered? If he ate our salt, did he not pay us with a thankful heart? Who can calculate the amount of friendliness and good feeling for our country

which this writer's generous and untiring regard for us disseminated in his own? His books are read by millions of his countrymen, whom he has taught to love England, and why to love her. It would have been easy to speak otherwise than he did: to inflame national rancours, which, at the time when he first became known as a public writer, war had just renewed: to cry down the old civilisation at the expense of the new: to point out our faults, arrogance, shortcomings, and give the republic to infer how much she was the parent state's superior. There are writers enough in the United States, honest and otherwise, who preach that kind of doctrine. But the good Irving, the peaceful, the friendly, had no place for bitterness in his heart, and no scheme but kindness. Received in England with extraordinary tenderness and friendship (Scott, Southey, Byron, a hundred others have borne witness to their liking for him), he was a messenger of goodwill and peace between his country and ours. 'See, friends!' he seems to say, 'these English are not so wicked, rapacious, callous, proud, as you have been taught to believe them. I went amongst them a humble man; won my way by my pen; and, when known, found every hand held out to me with kindness and welcome. Scott is a great man, you acknowledge. Did not Scott's king of England give a gold medal to him, and another to me, your countryman, and a stranger?'

Tradition in the United States still fondly retains the history of the feasts and rejoicings which awaited Irving on his return to his native country from Europe. He had a national welcome; he stammered in his speeches, hid himself in confusion, and the people loved him all the better. He had worthily represented America in Europe. In that young community a man who brings home with him abundant European testimonials is still treated with respect (I have found American writers of wide-world reputation, strangely solicitous about the opinions of

quite obscure British critics, and elated or depressed by their judgment); and Irving went home medalled by the king, diplomatised by the university, crowned, and honoured and admired. He had not in any way intrigued for his honours, he had fairly won them; and, in Irving's instance, as in others, the old country was glad and eager to pay them.

In America the love and regard for Irving was a national sentiment. Party wars are perpetually raging there, and are carried on by the press with a rancour and fierceness against individuals which exceed British, almost Irish, virulence. It seemed to me, during a year's travel in the country, as if no one ever aimed a blow at Irving. All men held their hand from that harmless, friendly peacemaker. I had the good fortune to see him at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, and remarked how in every place he was honoured and welcomed. Every large city has its 'Irving House.' The country takes pride in the fame of its men of letters. The gate of his own charming little domain on the beautiful Hudson River was for ever swinging before visitors who came to him. He shut out no one. I had seen many pictures of his house, and read descriptions of it, in both of which it was treated with a not unusual American exaggeration. It was but a pretty little cabin of a place; the gentleman of the press who took notes of the place, whilst his kind old host was sleeping, might have visited the whole house in a couple of minutes.

And how came it that this house was so small, when Mr. Irving's books were sold by hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, when his profits were known to be large, and the habits of life of the good old bachelor were notoriously modest and simple? He had loved once in his life. The lady he loved died; and he whom all the world loved, never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not



the very cheerfulness of his after-life add to the pathos of that untold story? To grieve always was not in his nature; or, when he had his sorrow, to bring all the world in to condole with him and bemoan it. Deep and quiet he lays the love of his heart, and buries it; and grass and flowers grow over the scarred ground in due time.

Irving had such a small house and such narrow rooms, because there was a great number of people to occupy them. He could only afford to keep one old horse (which, lazy and aged as it was, managed once or twice to run away with that careless old horseman). He could only afford to give plain sherry to that amiable British paragraph-monger from New York, who saw the patriarch asleep over his modest, blameless cup, and fetched the public into his private chamber to look at him. Irving could only live very modestly, because the wifeless, childless man had a number of children to whom he was as a father. He had as many as nine nieces, I am told—I saw two of these ladies at his house—with all of whom the dear old man had shared the produce of his labour and genius.

*'Be a good man, my dear.'* One can't but think of these last words of the veteran Chief of Letters, who had tasted and tested the value of worldly success, admiration, prosperity. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family, gentle, generous, good-humoured, affectionate, self-denying: in society, a delightful example of complete gentlemanhood; quite unspoiled by prosperity; never obsequious to the great (or, worse still to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries); eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit; always kind and affable with the young members of his calling; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful; one of the most charming masters of our lighter language; the constant friend to us and our

nation; to men of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of goodness, probity, and pure life:—I don't know what sort of testimonial will be raised to him in his own country, where generous and enthusiastic acknowledgement of American merit is never wanting: but Irving was in our service as well as theirs; and as they have placed a stone at Greenwich yonder in memory of that gallant young Bellot, who shared the perils and fate of some of our Arctic seamen, I would like to hear of some memorial raised by English writers and friends of letters in affectionate remembrance of the dear and good Washington Irving.

As for the other writer, whose departure many friends, some few most dearly-loved relatives, and multitudes of admiring readers deplore, our republic has already decreed his statue, and he must have known that he had earned this posthumous honour. He is not a poet and a man of letters merely, but citizen, statesman, a great British worthy. Almost from the first moment when he appears, amongst boys, amongst college students, amongst men, he is marked, and takes rank as a great Englishman. All sorts of successes are easy to him: as a lad he goes down into the arena with others, and wins all the prizes to which he has a mind. A place in the senate is straightway offered to the young man. He takes his seat there; he speaks, when so minded, without party anger or intrigue, but not without party faith and a sort of heroic enthusiasm for his cause. Still he is a poet and philosopher even more than orator. That he may have leisure and means to pursue his darling studies, he absents himself for a while, and accepts a richly-remunerated post in the East. As learned a man may live in a cottage or a college common-room; but it always seemed to me that ample means and recognised rank were Macaulay's as of right. Years ago there was a wretched outcry raised because Mr. Macaulay dated a letter from Windsor.

Castle, where he was staying. Immortal gods! Was this man not a fit guest for any palace in the world? or a fit companion for any man or woman in it? I daresay, after Austerlitz, the old K. K. court officials and footmen sneered at Napoleon for dating from Schonbrunn. But that miserable 'Windsor Castle' outcry is an echo out of fast-retreating old-world remembrances. The place of such a natural chief was amongst the first of the land; and that country is best, according to our British notion at least, where the man of eminence has the best chance of investing his genius and intellect.

If a company of giants were got together, very likely one or two of the mere six-feet-six people might be angry at the incontestable superiority of the very tallest of the party: and so I have heard some London wits, rather peevish at Macaulay's superiority, complain that he occupied too much of the talk, and so forth. Now that wonderful tongue is to speak no more, will not many a man grieve that he no longer has the chance to listen? To remember the talk is to wonder: to think not only of the treasures he had in his memory, but of the trifles he had stored there, and could produce with equal readiness. Almost on the last day I had the fortune to see him, a conversation happened suddenly to spring up about senior wranglers, and what they had done in after-life. To the almost terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801—2—3—4, and so on, giving the name of each, and relating his subsequent career and rise. Every man who has known him has his story regarding that astonishing memory. It may be he was not ill-pleased that you should recognise it; but to those prodigious intellectual feats, which were so easy to him, who would grudge his tribute of homage? His talk was, in a word, admirable, and we admired it.

Of the notices which have appeared regarding Lord Macaulay, up to the day when the present lines are written

(the 9th of January), the reader should not deny himself the pleasure of looking especially at two. It is a good sign of the times when such articles as these (I mean the articles in *The Times* and *Saturday Review*) appear in our public prints about our public men. They educate us, as it were, to admire rightly. An uninstructed person in a museum or at a concert may pass by without recognising a picture or a passage of music, which the connoisseur by his side may show him is a masterpiece of harmony, or a wonder of artistic skill. After reading these papers you like and respect more the person you have admired so much already. And so with regard to Macaulay's style there may be faults of course—what critic can't point them out? But for the nonce we are not talking about faults: we want to say *nil nisi bonum*. Well—take at hazard any three pages of the *Essays* or *History*;—and glimmering below the stream of the narrative, as it were, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Why is this epithet used? Whence is that simile drawn? How does he manage, in two or three words, to paint an individual, or to indicate a landscape? Your neighbour, who has *his* reading, and *his* little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points, allusions, happy touches, indicating not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful industry, the honest, humble previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description.

Many Londoners—not all—have seen the British Museum Library. I speak *à coeur ouvert*, and pray the kindly reader to bear with me. I have seen all sorts of domes of Peters and Pauls, Sophia, Pantheon,—what not?—and have been struck by none of them so much as by that catholic dome in Bloomsbury, under which our million volumes are housed. What peace, what love,

what truth, what beauty, what happiness for all, what generous kindness for you and me, are here spread out! It seems to me one cannot sit down in that place without a heart full of grateful reverence. I own to have said my grace at the table, and to have thanked heaven for this my English birthright, freely to partake of these bountiful books, and to speak the truth I find there. Under the dome which held Macaulay's brain, and from which his solemn eyes looked out on the world but a fortnight since, what a vast, brilliant, and wonderful store of learning was ranged! what strange lore would he not fetch for you at your bidding! A volume of law, or history, a book of poetry familiar or forgotten (except by himself who forgot nothing), a novel ever so old, and he had it at hand. I spoke to him once about *Clarissa*. 'Not read *Clarissa*!' he cried out. 'If you have once thoroughly entered on *Clarissa*, and are infected by it, you can't leave it. When I was in India, I passed one hot season at the hills, and there were the governor-general, and the secretary of government, and the commander-in-chief, and their wives. I had *Clarissa* with me: as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace! The governor's wife seized the book, and the secretary waited for it, and the chief-justice could not read it for tears.' He acted the whole scene: he paced up and down the Athenaeum library: I daresay he could have spoken pages of the book—of that book, and of what countless piles of others.

In this little paper let us keep to the text of *nil nisi bonum*. One paper I have read regarding Lord Macaulay says 'he had no heart.' Why, a man's books may not always speak the truth, but they speak his mind in spite of himself; and it seems to me this man's heart is beating through every page he penned. He is always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. How he cheers heroic resistance; how he backs and

applauds freedom struggling for its own; how he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful; how he recognises genius, though selfish villains possess it! The critic who says Macaulay had no heart, might say that Johnson had none: and two men more generous, and more loving, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history.

The writer who said that Lord Macaulay had no heart could not know him. Press writers should read a man well, and all over, and again; and hesitate, at least, before they speak of those *aidoia*. Those who knew Lord Macaulay knew how admirably tender, and generous, and affectionate he was. It was not his business to bring his family before the theatre footlights, and call for bouquets from the gallery as he wept over them.

If any young man of letters reads this little sermon—and to him, indeed, it is addressed—I would say to him, ‘Bear Scott’s words in your mind, and “*be good, my dear.*”’ Here are two literary men gone to their account, and, *laus Deo*, as far as we know, it is fair, and open, and clean. Here is no need of apologies for shortcomings, or explanations of vices, which would have been virtues but for unavoidable, etc. Here are two examples of men most differently gifted: each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life; just and irreproachable in his dealings; dear to his friends; honoured by his country; beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of both to give incalculable happiness and delight to the world, which thanks them in return with an immense kindness, respect, affection. It may not be our chance, brother scribe, to be endowed with such merit, or rewarded with such fame. But the rewards of these men are rewards paid to *our service*. We may not win the baton or epaulettes; but God give us strength to guard the honour of the flag!

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

(1811—1863)

### XIII

#### THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR

All work is noble; work is alone noble. There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so mean, is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it.—'Know thyself': long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou can'st work at; and work at it like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, 'an endless significance lies in work,' a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself just ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor day-worker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmur-

ing far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him; is it not as purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flames! ✓

\* \* \* \* \*

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows;—draining off the sour festering water, gradually, from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his God-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness,—to all knowledge, 'self-knowledge,' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. 'Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone.'

\* \* \* \* \*

All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart; which includes all Kepler, Calculations, Newton Meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms, up to that 'Agony of bloody sweat,' which all men have called divine! O



brother, if this is not 'worship,' then I say, the more pity for worship; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; see thy fellow-workmen there, in God's Eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving: sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is one Liturgy which does remain forever unexceptionable: that of Praying (as the old monks did withal) by Working. And indeed the Prayer which accomplished itself in special chapels at stated hours, and went not with a man, rising up from all his Work and Action, at all moments sanctifying the same,—What was it ever good for? 'Work is worship': yes, in a highly considerable sense,—which, in the present state of all 'worship' who is there that can unfold? He that understands it well, understands the Prophecy of the whole Future; the last Evangel, which has included all others. Its Cathedral the Dome of Immensity,—hast thou seen it? Coped with the star-galaxies; paved with the green mosaic of land and ocean; and for altar, verily, the Star-throne of the Eternal! Its litany and psalmody the noble acts, the heroic work and suffering, and true heart-utterance of all the Valiant Sons of Men. Its choir-music the ancient winds and oceans, and deep-toned, inarticulate, but most speaking voices of Destiny and History,—supernal ever as of old.

, THOMAS CARLYLE. (1795—1891)

## XIV

### A COUNTRY CRICKET MATCH

I doubt if there be any scene in the world more animating or delightful than a cricket-match:—I do not mean a set match at Lord's Ground for money, hard money, between a certain number of gentlemen and players, as they are called—people who make a trade of the noble sport, and degrade it into an affair of bettings, and hedgings, and cheatings, it may be, like boxing and horse-racing; nor do I mean a pretty fête in a gentleman's park, where one club of cricketing dandies encounter another such club, and where they show off in graceful costume to a gay marquee of admiring belles. No! the cricket that I mean is a real solid, old-fashioned match between neighbouring parishes, where each attacks the other for honour and a supper, glory and half-a-crown a man. If there be any gentlemen amongst us, it is well—if not, it is so much the better. Your gentleman cricketer is in general rather an anomalous character. Elderly gentlemen are obviously good for nothing; and your beaux are, for the most part, hampered and trammelled by dress and habit; the stiff cravat, the pinched-in waist, the dandy walk—oh, they will never do for cricket.

No! the village match is the thing—where our highest officer—our conductor—to borrow a musical term—is but a little farmer's second son; where a day-labourer is our bowler, and a blacksmith our long-stop; where the spectators consist of the retired cricketers, the veterans of the green, the careful mothers, the girls, and all the boys of two parishes, together with a few amateurs, little above

them in rank, and not at all in pretension; where laughing and shouting, and the very ecstasy of merriment and good-humour prevail: such a match, in short, as I attended yesterday, at the expense of getting twice wet through and as I would attend tomorrow at the certainty of having that ducking doubled.

For the last three weeks our village has been in a state of great excitement, occasioned by a challenge from our north-western neighbours, the men of B., to contend with us at cricket. Now, we have not been much in the habit of playing matches. Three or four years ago, indeed, we encountered the men of S., our neighbours south-by-east, with a sort of doubtful success, beating them on our own ground, whilst they in the second match returned the compliment on theirs. This discouraged us. The sport, therefore, had languished until the present season, when under another change of circumstances the spirit began to revive. Half-a-dozen fine active lads, of influence amongst their comrades, grew into men and yearned for cricket; an enterprising publican gave a set of ribands: his rival, mine host of the Rose, an out-doer by profession, gave two . . . . In short, the practice recommenced, and the hill was again alive with men and boys, and innocent merriment; but farther than the riband matches amongst ourselves nobody dreamed of going, till this challenge—we were modest, and doubted our own strength. The B. people, on the other hand, must have been braggers born, a whole parish of gasconaders. Never was such boasting! such crowing! such ostentatious display of practice! such mutual compliments from man to man—bowler to batter, batter to bowler! It was a wonder they did not challenge all England. It must be confessed that we were a little astounded; yet we firmly resolved not to decline the combat; and one of the most spirited of the new growth, William Grey by name, took up the glove in a style of manly courtesy, that would have done honour to a knight

in the days of chivalry. "We were not professed players," he said, "being little better than schoolboys, and scarcely older; but since they had done us the honour to challenge us, we would try our strength. It would be no discredit to be beaten by such a field."

Having accepted the wager of battle, our champion began forthwith to collect his forces. William Grey is himself one of the finest youths that one shall see—tall, active, slender and yet strong, with a piercing eye full of sagacity, and a smile full of good humour—a farmer's son by station, and used to hard work as farmers' sons are now, liked by everybody, and admitted to be an excellent cricketer. He immediately set forth to muster his men, remembering with great complacency that Samuel Long, a bowler *comme il y en a peu*, the very man who had knocked down nine wickets, had beaten us, bowled us out at the fatal return match some years ago at S., had luckily, in a remove of a quarter of a mile last Lady-day, crossed the boundaries of his old parish, and actually belonged to us.

He was a stroke of good fortune! Our captain applied to him instantly; and he agreed at a word. Indeed, Samuel Long is a very civilised person. He is a middle-aged man, who looks rather old amongst our young lads, and whose thickness and breadth give no token of remarkable activity; but he is very active, and so steady a player! so safe! We had half gained the match when we had secured him. He is a man of substance, too, in every way; owns one cow, two donkeys, six pigs, and geese and ducks beyond count—dresses like a farmer, and owes no man a shilling—and all this from pure industry, sheer day-labour. Note that your good cricketer is commonly the most industrious man in the parish; the habits that make him such are precisely those which make a good workman—steadiness, sobriety, and activity—Samuel

Long might pass for the *beau ideal* of the two characters. Happy were we to possess him!

Then we had another piece of good luck. James Brown, a journeyman blacksmith and a native, who, being of a rambling disposition, had roamed from place to place for half-a-dozen years, had just returned to settle with his brother at another corner of our village, bringing with him a prodigious reputation in cricket and in gallantry—the gay Lothario of the neighbourhood. He is said to have made more conquests in love and in cricket than any blacksmith in the country. To him also went the indefatigable William Grey, and he also consented to play. No end to our good fortune! Another celebrated batter, called Joseph Hearne, had likewise recently married into the parish. He worked, it is true, at the A. mills, but slept at the house of his wife's father in our territories. He also was sought and found by our leader. But he was grand and shy; made an immense favour of the thing; courted courting and then hung back: "Did not know that he could be spared; had partly resolved not to play again—at least not this season; thought it rash to accept the challenge; thought they might do without him—" "Truly I think so too," said our spirited champion; "we will not trouble you, Mr. Hearne."

Having thus secured two powerful auxiliaries, and rejected a third, we began to reckon and select the regular native forces. Thus ran our list:

William Grey, 1; Samuel Long, 2; James Brown, 3; George and John Simmons, one capital, the other so-so—an uncertain hitter, but a good fieldsman, 5; Joel Brent, excellent, 6; Ben Appleton—here was a little pause—Ben's abilities at cricket were not completely ascertained; but then he was so good a fellow, so full of fun and waggy! no doing without Ben. So he figured in the list, 7; George Harris—a short halt there too! Slowish—slow but sure. I think the proverb brought him in, 8; Tom Coper

— oh, beyond the world, Tom Coper! the red-headed gardening lad, whose left-handed strokes send *her* (a cricket ball, like that other moving thing, a ship, is always of the feminine gender), send her spinning a mile, 9; Harry Willis, another blacksmith, 10.

We had now ten of our eleven, but the choice of the last occasioned some demur. Three young Martins, rich farmers of the neighbourhood, successively presented themselves and were all rejected by our independent and impartial general for want of merit—*cricketal* merit. "Not good enough," was his pithy answer. Then our worthy neighbour, the half-pay lieutenant, offered his services—he, too, though with some hesitation and modesty, was refused. "Not quite young enough," was his sentence. John Strong, the exceeding long son of our dwarfish mason, was the next candidate—a nice youth—everybody likes John Strong—and a willing, but so tall and so limp, bent in the middle—a thread-paper, six feet high! We were all afraid that, in spite of his name, his strength would never hold out. "Wait till next year, John," quoth William Grey, with all the dignified seniority of twenty speaking to eighteen. "Coper's a year younger," said John. "Coper's a foot shorter," replied William: so John retired: and the eleventh man remained unchosen, almost to the eleventh hour. The eve of the match arrived, and the post was still vacant, when a little boy of fifteen, David Willis, brother to Harry, admitted by accident to the last practice, saw eight of them out, and was voted in by acclamation.

The Sunday evening's practice (for Monday was the important day) was a period of great anxiety, and, to say the truth, of great pleasure. There is something strangely delightful in the innocent spirit of party. To be one of a numerous body, to be authorised to say *we*, to have a rightful interest in triumph or defeat, is gratifying at once to social feeling and so to personal pride. There was not

a ten-year-old urchin, or a septuagenary woman in the parish, who did not feel an additional importance, a reflected consequence, in speaking of "our sides." An election interests in the same way; but that feeling is less pure. Money is there, and hatred, and politics, and lies. Oh, to be a voter, or a voter's wife, comes nothing near the genuine and hearty sympathy of belonging to a parish, breathing the same air, looking on the same trees, listening to the same nightingales! Talk of a patriotic elector! Give me a parochial patriot, a man who loves his parish! Even we, the female partisans, may partake the common ardour. I am sure I did. I never, though tolerably eager and enthusiastic at all times, remember being in a more delicious state of excitement than on the eve of that battle. Our hopes waxed stronger and stronger. Those of our players who were present were excellent. William Grey got forty notches off his own bat; and that brilliant hitter, Tom Coper<sup>†</sup>, gained eight from two successive balls. As the evening advanced, too, we had encouragement of another sort. A spy, who had been despatched to reconnoitre the enemy's quarters, returned from their practising ground with a most consolatory report. "Really," said Charles Grover, our intelligence—a fine old steady judge, one who had played well in his day—"they are no better than so many old women. Any five of ours would beat their eleven." This sent us to bed in high spirits.

Morning dawned less favourably. The sky promised a series of deluging showers, and kept its word as English skies are wont to do on such occasions; and a lamentable message arrived at the headquarters from our trusty comrade Joel Brent. His master, a great farmer, had begun the hay-harvest that very morning, and Joel, being as eminent in one field as in another, could not be spared. Imagine Joel's plight! the most ardent of all our eleven! a knight held back from the tourney! a soldier from the

battle! The poor swain was inconsolable. At last, one who is always ready to do a good-natured action, great or little, set forth to back his position; and, by dint of appealing to the public spirit of our worthy neighbour and the state of the barometer, talking alternately of the parish honour and thunder showers, of lost matches and sopped hay, he carried his point, and returned triumphantly with the delighted Joel.

In the meantime we became sensible of another defalcation. On calling over our roll, Brown was missing; and the spy of the preceding night, Charles Grover—the universal scout and messenger of the village, a man who will run half-a-dozen miles for a pint of beer, who does errands for the very love of trade, who, if he had been a lord, would have been an ambassador—was instantly despatched to summon the truant. His report spread general consternation. Brown had set off at four o'clock in the morning to play in a cricket match at M., a little town twelve miles off, which had been his last residence. Here was desertion! Here was treachery! Here was treachery against that goodly state, our parish! To send James Brown to Coventry was the immediate resolution; but even that seemed too light a punishment for such delinquency. Then how we cried him down! At ten on Sunday night (for the rascal had actually practised with us, and never said a word of his intended disloyalty) he was our faithful mate, and the best player (take him for all in all) of the eleven. At ten in the morning he had run away, and we were well rid of him; he was no better compared with William Grey or Tom Copper; not fit to wipe the shoes of Samuel Long, as a bowler; nothing of a scout to John Simmons; the boy David Willis was worth fifty of him—

“I trust we have within our realm,

Five hundred good as he.”

was the universal sentiment. So we took tall John Strong,



who, with an incurable hankering after the honour of being admitted, had kept constantly with the players, to take the chance of some such accident—we took John for our *pis-aller*. I never saw any one prouder than the good-humoured lad was of this not very flattering piece of preferment.

John Strong was elected, and Brown sent to Coventry; and when I first heard of his delinquency, I thought the punishment only too mild for the crime . . . . .

At last we were all assembled, and marched down to H. common, the appointed ground, which, though in our dominions according to the maps, was the constant practising place of our opponents, and *terra incognita* to us. We found our adversaries on the ground as we expected, for our various delays had hindered us from taking the field so early as we wished; and, as soon as we had settled all preliminaries, the match began.

But, alas! I have been so long settling my preliminaries, that I have left myself no room for the detail of our victory, and must squeeze the account of our grand achievements into as little compass as Cowley, when he crammed the names of eleven of his mistresses into the narrow space of four eight-syllable lines. *They* began the warfare—those boastful men of B. And what think you, gentle reader, was the amount of innings! These challengers—the famous eleven—how many did they get? Think! imagine! guess!—You cannot?—Well!—they got twenty-two, or, rather, they got twenty; for two of theirs were short notches, and would never have been allowed, only that, seeing what they were made of, we and our umpires were not particular. They should have had twenty more if they had chosen to claim them. Oh, how well we fielded! and how well we bowled! our good play had quite as much to do with their miserable failure as their bad. Samuel Long is a slow bowler, George Simmons a fast one, and the change from Long's lobbing to

Simmons' fast balls posed them completely. Poor simpletons! they were always wrong, expecting the slow for the quick, and quick for the slow. Well, we went in. And what were our innings? Guess again! guess! A hundred and sixty-nine! in spite of soaking showers, and wretched ground, where the ball would not run a yard, we headed them by a hundred and forty-seven; and then they gave in, as well they might. William Grey pressed them much to try another innings. "There was so much chance," as he courteously observed, "in cricket, that advantageous as our position seemed, we might, very possibly, be overtaken. The B. men had better try." But they were beaten sulky, and would not move—to my great disappointment; I wanted to prolong the pleasure of success. What a glorious sensation it is to be for five hours together—winning—winning! always feeling what a whist-player feels when he takes up four honours, seven trumps! Who would think that a little bit of leather, and two pieces of wood, had such a delightful and delighting power!

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD. (1787—1855)

## XV

### HOW MR. SQUEERS TAUGHT HIS PUPILS

A ride of two hundred and odd miles in severe weather, is one of the best softeners of a hard bed that ingenuity can devise. Perhaps it is even a sweetener of dreams, for those which hovered over the rough couch of Nicholas, and whispered their airy nothings in his ear were of an agreeable and happy kind. He was making his fortune very fast indeed, when the faint glimmer of an expiring candle shone before his eyes, and a voice he had no difficulty in recognising as part and parcel of Mr. Squeers, admonished him that it was time to rise.

'Past seven, Nickleby,' said Mr. Squeers.

'Has morning come already?' asked Nicholas, sitting up in bed.

'Ah! that it has,' replied Squeers, 'and ready iced too.

Now, Nickleby, come; tumble up, will you?'

Nicholas needed no further admonition, but 'tumbled up' at once, and proceeded to dress himself by the light of the taper which Mr. Squeers carried in his hand.

'Here's a pretty go,' said that gentleman; 'the pump's froze.'

'Indeed!' said Nicholas, not much interested in the intelligence.

'Yes,' replied Squeers. 'You can't wash yourself this morning.'

'Not wash myself!' exclaimed Nicholas.

'No, not a bit of it,' rejoined Squeers, tartly. 'So you must be contented with giving yourself a dry polish till we break the ice in the well, and can get a bucketful out for

the boys. Don't stand staring at me, but do look sharp, will you?'

Offering no further observation, Nicholas huddled on his clothes. Squeers meanwhile opened the shutters and blew the candle out; when the voice of his amiable consort was heard in the passage, demanding admittance.

'Come in, my love,' said Squeers.

Mrs. Squeers came in, still habited in the primitive night-jacket which had displayed the symmetry of her figure on the previous night, and further ornamented with a beaver bonnet of some antiquity, which she wore, with much ease and lightness, on the top of the nightcap before mentioned.

'Drat the things,' said the lady, opening the cupboard; 'I can't find the school spoon anywhere.'

'Never mind it, my dear,' observed Squeers, in a soothing manner; 'it's of no consequence.'

'No consequence, why how you talk!' retorted Mrs. Squeers, sharply; 'isn't it brimstone morning?'

'I forgot, my dear,' rejoined Squeers; 'yes, it certainly is. We purify the boys' bloods now and then, Nickleby.'

'Purify fiddlesticks' ends,' said his lady. 'Don't think, young man, that we go to the expense of flower of brimstone and molasses, just to purify them; because if you think we carry on the business in that way you'll find yourself mistaken, and so I tell you plainly.'

'My dear,' said Squeers, frowning. 'Hem!'

'Oh! nonsense,' rejoined Mrs. Squeers. 'If the young man comes to be a teacher here, let him understand, at once, that we don't want any foolery about the boys. They have the brimstone and treacle, partly because if they hadn't something or other in the way of medicine they'd be always ailing and giving a world of trouble, and partly because it spoils their appetites and comes cheaper than breakfast and dinner. So, it does them good and us

good, at the same time, and that's fair enough I'm sure.'

Having given this explanation, Mrs. Squeers put her head into the cupboard and instituted a stricter search after the spoon, in which Mr. Squeers assisted. A few words passed between them while they were thus engaged, but as their voices were partially stifled by the cupboard, all that Nicholas could distinguish was that Mr. Squeers said what Mrs. Squeers had said was injudicious, and that Mrs. Squeers said that what Mr. Squeers said was 'stuff.'

A vast deal of searching and rummaging ensued, and it proving fruitless, Smike was called in and pushed by Mrs. Squeers, and boxed by Mr. Squeers; which course of treatment brightening his intellect, enabled him to suggest that possibly Mrs. Squeers might have the spoon in her pocket, as indeed turned out to be the case. As Mrs. Squeers had previously protested, however, that she was quite certain she had not got it, Smike received another box on the ear for presuming to contradict his mistress, together with a promise of a sound thrashing if he were not more respectful in future; so that he took nothing very advantageous by his motion.

Now, the fact was, that both Mr. and Mrs. Squeers viewed the boys in the light of their proper and natural enemies; or, in other words, they held and considered that their business and profession was to get as much from every boy as could by possibility be screwed out of him. On this point they were both agreed, and behaved in unison accordingly. The only difference between them was, that Mrs. Squeers waged war against the enemy openly and fearlessly, and that Squeers covered his rascality, even at home, with a spice of his habitual deceit; as if he really had a notion of some day or other being able to take himself in, and persuade his own mind that he was a very good fellow.

'But come,' said Squeers, interrupting the progress of some thoughts to this effect in the mind of his usher,

'let's go to the school-room; and lend me a hand with my school-coat, will you?'

Nicholas assisted his master to put on an old fustian shooting-jacket, which he took down from a peg in the passage; and Squeers, arming himself with his cane, led the way across the yard, to a door in the rear of the house.

'There,' said the schoolmaster as they stepped in together; 'this is our shop, Nickleby!'

It was such a crowded scene, and there were so many objects to attract attention, that, at first, Nicholas stared about him, really without seeing anything at all. By degrees, however, the place resolved itself into a bare and dirty room, with a couple of windows, whereof a tenth part might be of glass, the remainder being stopped up with old copybooks and paper. There were a couple of long old rickety desks, cut and notched, and inked, and damaged, in every possible way; two or three forms; a detached desk for Squeers; and another for his assistant. The ceiling was supported, like that of a barn, by cross beams and rafters; and the walls were so stained and discoloured, that it was impossible to tell whether they had ever been touched with paint or whitewash.

Mrs. Squeers stood at one of the desks, presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle, of which delicious compound she administered a large instalment to each boy in succession: using for the purpose a common wooden spoon, which might have been originally manufactured for some gigantic top, and which widened every young gentleman's mouth considerably: they being all obliged, under heavy corporal penalties, to take in the whole of the bowl at a gasp. In another corner, huddled together for companionship, were the little boys who had arrived on the previous night, three of them in very large leather breeches, and two in old trousers, a something tighter fit than drawers are usually worn; at no great distance from these was seated the juvenile son and heir of

Mr. Squeers—a striking likeness of his father—kicking, with great vigour, under the hands of Smike, who was fitting upon him a pair of new boots that bore a most suspicious resemblance to those which the least of the little boys had worn on the journey down—as the little boy himself seemed to think, for he was regarding the appropriation with a look of most rueful amazement.

Besides these, there was a long row of boys waiting, with countenances of no pleasant anticipation, to be treacled; and another file, who had just escaped from the infliction, making a variety of wry mouths indicative of anything but satisfaction. The whole were attired in such motley, ill-assorted, extraordinary garments, as would have been irresistibly ridiculous, but for the foul appearance of dirt, disorder, and disease, with which they were associated.

‘Now,’ said Squeers, giving the desk a great rap with his cane, which made half the little boys nearly jump out of their boots, ‘is that physicking over?’

‘Just over,’ said Mrs. Squeers, choking the last boy in her hurry, and tapping the crown of his head with the wooden spoon to restore him. ‘Here, you Smike; take away now. Look sharp!’

Smike shuffled out with the basin, and Mrs. Squeers having called up a little boy with a curly head, and wiped her hands upon it, hurried out after him into a species of wash-house, where there was a small fire and a large kettle, together with a number of little wooden bowls which were ranged upon a board.

Into these bowls, Mrs. Squeers, assisted by the hungry servant, poured a brown composition, which looked like diluted pincushions without the covers, and was called porridge. A minute wedge of brown bread was inserted in each bowl, and when they had eaten the porridge by means of the bread, the boys ate the bread itself, and had finished their breakfast; whereupon Mr Squeers said, in

a solemn voice, 'For what we have received may the Lord make us truly thankful'—and went away to his own.

Nicholas distended his stomach with a bowl of porridge for much the same reason which induces some savages to swallow earth—lest they should be inconveniently hungry when there is nothing to eat. Having further disposed of a slice of bread and butter, allotted to him, in virtue of his office, he sat himself down, to wait for school time."

He could not but observe how silent and sad the boys all seemed to be. There was none of the noise and clamour of a school-room; none of its boisterous play, or hearty mirth. The children sat crouching and shivering together, and seemed to lack the spirit to move about. The only pupil who evinced the slightest tendency towards locomotion or playfulness, was Master Squeers, and as his chief amusement was to tread upon the other boys' toes in his new boots, his flow of spirits was rather disagreeable than otherwise."

After some half-hour's delay, Mr. Squeers reappeared, and the boys took their places and their books, of which latter commodity the average was about one to eight learners. A few minutes having elapsed, during which Mr. Squeers looked very profound, as if he had a perfect apprehension of what was inside all the books, and could say every word of their contents by heart if he only chose to take the trouble, that gentleman called up the first class.

Obedient to this summons there ranged themselves in front of the schoolmaster's desk, half a dozen scarecrows, out at knees and elbows, one of whom placed a torn and filthy book beneath his learned eye.

'This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby,' said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. 'We'll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy?'

'Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window,'



said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

'So he is, to be sure,' rejoined Squeers. 'We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a case-ment. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?'

'Please, sir, he's weeding the garden,' replied a small voice.

'To be sure,' said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby: what do you think of it?'

'It's a very useful one, at any rate,' answered Nicholas.

'I believe you,' rejoined Squeers, not remarking the emphasis of his usher. 'Third boy, what's a horse?'

'A beast, sir,' replied the boy.

'So it is,' said Squeers. 'Ain't it, Nickleby?'

'I believe there is no doubt of that, sir,' answered Nicholas.

'Of course there isn't,' said Squeers. 'A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having grammars at all?'

'Where, indeed!' said Nicholas abstractedly.

'As you're perfect in that,' resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, 'go and look after *my* horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of class go and draw water up, till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing-day tomorrow, and they want the coppers filled.'

So saying, he dismissed the first class to their experiments in practical philosophy, and eyed Nicholas with a look, half cunning and half doubtful, as if he were not

altogether certain what he might think of him by this time.

'That's the way we do it, Nickleby,' he said after a pause.

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders in a manner that was scarcely perceptible, and said he saw it was.

'And a very good way it is too,' said Squeers. 'Now just take them fourteen little boys and hear them some reading, because, you know, you must begin to be useful. Idling about here won't do.'

Mr. Squeers said this, as if it had suddenly occurred to him, either that he must not say too much to his assistant, or that his assistant did not say enough to him in praise of the establishment. The children were ranged in a semicircle round the new master, and he was soon listening to their dull, drawling, hesitating recital of those stories of engrossing interest which are to be found in the more antiquated spelling books.

In this exciting occupation, the morning lagged heavily on. At one o'clock, the boys having previously had their appetites thoroughly taken away by stir-about and potatoes, sat down in the kitchen to some hard salt beef, of which Nicholas was graciously permitted to take his portion to his own solitary desk, to eat it there in peace. After this, there was another hour of crouching in the school-room and shivering with cold, and then school began again.

CHARLES DICKENS. (1812—1870)

## XVI

### A HEROIC DEED

In the second week of September Maggie was again sitting in her lonely room. It was past midnight, and the rain was beating heavily against the window, driven with fitful force by the rushing, loud-moaning wind. For, there had been a sudden change in the weather: the heat and drought had given way to cold, variable winds, and heavy falls of rain at intervals.

In the counties higher up the Floss the rains had been continuous, and the completion of the harvest had been arrested. And now, for the last two days, the rains on this lower course of the river had been incessant, so that the old men had shaken their heads and talked of sixty years ago, when the same sort of weather, happening about the equinox, brought on the great floods, which swept the bridge away, and reduced the town to great misery.

But the younger generation, who had seen several small floods, thought lightly of these sombre recollections and forebodings, and Bob Jakin, naturally prone to take a hopeful view of his own luck, laughed at his mother when she regretted their having taken a house by the riverside, observing that but for that they would have had no boats, which were the most lucky of possessions in case of a flood that obliged them to go to a distance for food.

All were in their beds now, for it was past midnight—all except some solitary watchers such as Maggie. She was seated in her little parlour towards the river.

Suddenly Maggie felt a startling sensation of sudden cold about her knees and feet; it was water flowing under

her. She started up; the stream was flowing under the door that led into the passage. She was not bewildered for an instant; she knew it was the flood!

She hurried with the candle upstairs to Bob Jakin's bedroom. The door was a-jar; she went in and shook him by the shoulder.

"Bob, the flood is come! It is in the house! Let us see if we can make the boats safe."

She lighted his candle, while the poor wife, snatching up her baby, burst into screams; and then she hurried down again to see if the waters were rising fast. There was a step down into the room at the door leading from the staircase: she saw that the water was already on a level with the step. While she was looking, something came with a tremendous crash against the window, and sent the leaded panes and the old wooden framework inwards in shivers, the water pouring in after it.

"It is the boat!" cried Maggie. "Bob, come down to get the boats!"

And without a moment's shudder of fear, she plunged through the water, which was rising to her knees, and by the glimmering light of the candle she had left on the stairs, she mounted on to the window-sill and crept into the boat, which was left with the prow lodging and protruding through the window. Bob was not long after her, hurrying without shoes or stockings, but with the lanthorn in his hand.

"Why, they're both here—both the boats," said Bob, as he got into the one where Maggie was. "It's wonderful this fastening isn't broke too, as well as the mooring."

In the excitement of getting into the other boat, unfastening it, and mastering an oar, Bob was not struck with the danger Maggie incurred. We are not apt to fear for the fearless when we are companions in their danger, and Bob's mind was absorbed in possible expedi-

ents for the safety of the helpless indoors. The fact that Maggie had been up, had waked him, and had taken the lead in activity, gave Bob a vague impression of her as one who would help to protect, not need to be protected. She, too, had got possession of an oar, and had pushed off, so as to release the boat from the overhanging window-frame.

"The water's rising so fast," said Bob, "I doubt it'll be in at the chambers before long—th' house is so low. I've more mind to get Prissy and the child and the mother into the boat, if I could, and trusten to the water, for th' old house is none so safe. And if I let go the boat— But *you*," he exclaimed, suddenly lifting the light of his lanthorn on Maggie, as she stood in the rain with the oar in her hand and her black hair streaming.

Maggie had no time to answer, for a new tidal current swept along the line of the houses, and drove both the boats out on to the wide water, with a force that carried them far past the meeting current of the river.

In the first moments Maggie felt nothing, thought of nothing. The whole thing had been so rapid—so dream-like—that the threads of ordinary association were broken. She sank down on the seat clutching the oar mechanically, and for a long while had no distinct conception of her position. The first thing that waked her to fuller consciousness was the cessation of the rain, and a perception that the darkness was divided by the faintest light, which parted the overhanging gloom from the immeasurable watery level below. She was driven out upon the flood—that awful visitation of God which her father used to talk of—which had made the nightmare of her childish dreams. And with that thought there rushed in the vision of the old home—and Tom—and her mother. They had all listened together.

"O God, where am I? Which is the way home?" she cried out, in the dim loneliness.

What was happening to them at the mill? The flood had once nearly destroyed it. They might be in danger, in distress, her mother and her brother, alone there, beyond reach of help! Her whole soul was strained now on that thought; and she saw the long-loved faces looking for help into the darkness, and finding none.

She was floating in smooth water now—perhaps far on the over-flooded fields. There was no sense of present danger to check the outgoing of her mind to the old home; and she strained her eyes against the curtain of gloom, that she might seize the first sight of her whereabouts—that she might catch some faint suggestion of the spot towards which all her anxieties tended.

Oh, how welcome the widening of that dismal watery level—the gradual uplifting of the cloudy firmament—the slowly defining blackness of objects above the glassy dark! Yes, she must be out on the fields: those were the tops of hedgerow trees. Which way did the river lie? Looking behind her, she saw the lines of black trees; looking before her there were none. Then the river lay before her. She seized an oar and began to paddle the boat forward with the energy of wakening hope. The dawning seemed to advance more swiftly, now she was in action; and she could soon see the poor dumb beasts crowding piteously on a mound where they had taken refuge. Onward she paddled and rowed by turns in the growing twilight; her wet clothes clung round her, and her streaming hair was dashed about by the wind, but she was hardly conscious of any bodily sensations, except a sensation of strength, inspired by mighty emotion. Along with the sense of danger and possible rescue for those long-remembered beings at the old home there was an undefined sense of reconciliation with her brother. What quarrel, what harshness, what unbelief in each other can subsist in the presence of a great calamity, when all the artificial vesture of our life is gone,

and we are all one with each other in primitive mortal needs? Vaguely Maggie felt this, in the strong resurgent love towards her brother that swept away all the later impressions of hard, cruel offence and misunderstanding, and left only the deep, underlying, unshakable memories of early union.

She must get her boat into the current of the Floss, else she would never be able to pass the Ripple and approach the house; this was the thought that occurred to her as she imagined with more and more vividness the state of things round the old home. But then she might be carried very far down, and be unable to guide her boat out of the current again. For the first time distinct ideas of danger began to press upon her; but there was no choice of courses, no room for hesitation, and she floated into the current. Swiftly she went now, without effort; more and more clearly in the lessening distance and the growing light she began to discern the objects that she knew must be the well-known trees and roofs; nay, she was not far off a rushing, muddy current that must be the strangely altered Ripple.

There were floating masses in it, that might dash against her boat as she passed, and cause her to perish too soon. What were those masses?

For the first time Maggie's heart began to beat in an agony of dread. She sat helpless, dimly conscious that she was being floated along, more intensely conscious of the anticipated clash. But the horror was transient: it passed away before the oncoming warehouses of St. Ogg's. She had passed the mouth of the Ripple, then; now she must use all her skill and power to manage the boat and get it, if possible, out of the current. She could see now that the bridge was broken down; she could see the masts of a stranded vessel far out over the watery field. But no boats were to be seen moving on the

river: such as had been laid hands on were employed in the flooded streets.

With new resolution Maggie seized her oar, and stood up again to paddle; but the now ebbing tide added to the swiftness of the river, and she was carried along beyond the bridge. She could hear shouts from the windows overlooking the river, as if the people there were calling to her. It was not till she had passed on nearly to Tofton that she could get the boat clear of the current. Then with one yearning look towards her uncle Deane's house, that lay farther down the river, she took to both her oars and rowed with all her might across the watery fields, back towards the mill. Colour was beginning to awake now, and as she approached the Dorlcote fields she could discern the tints of the trees—could see the old Scotch firs to the right, and the home chestnuts. Oh! how deep they lay in the water—deeper than the trees on this side of the hill. And the roof of the mill—where was it? Those heavy fragments hurrying down the Ripple—what had they meant? But it was not the house: the house stood firm—drowned up to the first storey, but still firm; or was it broken in at the end towards the mill?

With panting joy that she was there at last—joy that overcame all distress—Maggie neared the front of the house. At first she heard no sound, she saw no object moving. Her boat was on a level with the upstairs windows. She called out in a loud, piercing voice,

"Tom, where are you? Mother, where are you? Here is Maggie!"

Soon, from the window of the attic in the central gable, she heard Tom's voice.

"Who is it? Have you brought a boat?"

"It is I, Tom—Maggie. Where is mother?"

"She is not here; she went to Garum the day before yesterday. I'll come down to the lower window."

"Alone,, Maggie?" said Tom, in a voice of deep



astonishment, as he opened the middle window on a level with the boat.

"Yes, Tom. God has taken care of me, to bring me to you. Get in quickly. Is there no one else?"

"No," said Tom, stepping into the boat; "I fear the man is drowned; he was carried down the Ripple, I think, when part of the mill fell with the crash of trees and stones against it. I've shouted again and again, and there has been no answer. Give me the oars, Maggie."

It was not till Tom had pushed off and they were on the wide water—he face to face with Maggie—that the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force—it was such a new revelation to his spirit of the depths in life that had lain beyond his vision, which he had fancied so keen and clear—that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other—Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face; Tom pale with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy, though the lips were silent; and though he could ask no question, he guessed a story of almost miraculous, divinely-protected effort. But at last a mist gathered over the blue-grey eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter—the old childish "Maggie."

Maggie could make no answer but a long deep sob of that mysterious, wondrous happiness that is one with pain.

As soon as she could speak she said, "We will go to Lucy, Tom; we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest."

Tom rowed with untired vigour, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

A new danger was being carried towards them by the river. Some wooden machinery had just given way on one of the wharves, and huge fragments were being floated

along. The sun was rising now, and the wide area of watery desolation was spread out in dreadful clearness around them; in dreadful clearness floated onwards the hurrying, threatening masses. A large company in a boat that was working its way along under the Tofton houses observed their danger, and shouted, "Get out of the current!"

But that could not be done at once, and Tom, looking before him, saw death rushing on them. Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream.

"It is coming, Maggie!" Tom said, in a deep, hoarse voice, loosing the oars and clasping her.

The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water, and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

But soon the keel of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water.

The boat reappeared, but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted, living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.

GEORGE ELIOT (1819—1880).

## XVII

### STORY-TELLING.

What is the best way of telling a story? Since the standard must be the interest of the audience, there must be several or many good ways rather than one best. For we get interested in the stories life presents to us through divers orders and modes of presentation. Very commonly our first awakening to a desire of knowing a man's past or future comes from our seeing him as a stranger in some unusual or pathetic or humorous situation, or manifesting some remarkable characteristics. We make 'inquiries in consequence, or we become observant and attentive whenever opportunities of knowing more may happen to present themselves without our search. You have seen a refined face among the prisoners picking tow in gaol; you afterwards see the same unforgettable face in a pulpit: he must be of dull fibre who would not care to know more about a life which showed such contrasts, though he might gather his knowledge in a fragmentary and unchronological way.

Again, we have heard much, or at least something not quite common, about a man whom we have never seen, and hence we look round with curiosity when we are told that he is present; whatever he says or does before us is charged with a meaning due to our previous hearsay knowledge about him, gathered either from dialogue of which he was expressly and emphatically the subject, or from incidental remark, or from general report either in or out of print.

These indirect ways of arriving at knowledge are always the most stirring even in relation to impersonal subjects. To see a chemical experiment gives an attractiveness to a definition of chemistry, and fills it with a significance which it would never have had without the pleasant

shock of an unusual sequence such as the transformation of a solid into gas, and *vice versa*. To see a word for the first time either as substantive or adjective in a connexion where we care about knowing its complete meaning, is the way to vivify its meaning in our recollection. Curiosity becomes the more eager from the incompleteness of the first information. Moreover, it is in this way that memory works in its incidental revival of events: some salient experience appears in inward vision, and in consequence the antecedent facts are retraced from what is regarded as the beginning of the episode in which that experience made a more or less strikingly memorable part. 'Ah! I remember addressing the mob from the hustings at Westminster—you wouldn't have thought that I could ever have been in such a position. Well, how I came there was in this way—;' and then follows a retrospective narration.

The modes of telling a story founded on these processes of outward and inward life derive their effectiveness from the superior mastery of images and pictures in grasping the attention—or, one might say with more fundamental accuracy, from the fact that our earliest, strongest impressions, our most intimate convictions, are simply images added to more or less of sensation. These are the primitive instruments of thought. Hence it is not surprising that early poetry took this way—telling a daring deed, a glorious achievement, without caring for what went before. The desire for orderly narration is a later, more reflective birth. The presence of the Jack in the box affects every child: it is the more reflective lad, the miniature philosopher, who wants to know how he got there.

The only stories life presents to us in an orderly way are those of our autobiography, or the career of our companions from our childhood upwards, or perhaps of our own children. But it is a great art to make a connected strictly relevant narrative of such careers as we can recount

from the beginning. In these cases the sequence of associations is almost sure to overmaster the sense of proportion. Such narratives *ab ovo* are summer's-day stories for happy loungers; not the cup of self-forgetting excitement to the busy who can snatch an hour of entertainment.

But the simple opening of a story with a date and necessary account of places and people, passing on quietly towards the more rousing elements of narrative and dramatic presentation, without need of retrospect, has its advantages which have to be measured by the nature of the story. Spirited narrative, without more than a touch of dialogue here and there, may be made eminently interesting, and is suited to the novelette. Examples of its charm are seen in the short tales in which the French have a mastery never reached by the English, who usually demand coarser flavours than are given by that delightful gaiety which is well described by La Fontaine\* as not anything that provokes fits of laughter, but a certain charm, an agreeable mode of handling which lends attractiveness to all subjects even the most serious. And it is this sort of gaiety which plays around the best French novelettes. But the opening chapters of the *Vicar of Wakefield* are as fine as anything that can be done in this way.

Why should a story not be told in the most irregular fashion that an author's idiosyncrasy may prompt, provided that he gives what we can enjoy? The objections to Sterne's wild way of telling *Tristram Shandy* lie more solidly in the quality of the interrupting matter than in the fact of interruption. The dear public would do well to reflect that they are often bored from the want of flexibility in their own minds. They are like the toppers of 'one liquor.'

GEORGE ELIOT.

\*'Je n'appelle pas gayeté ce qui excite le rire, mais un certain charme, un air agréable qu'on peut donner à toutes sortes de sujets, même les plus sérieux'.—Preface to *Fables*. ['I do not call gaiety that which excites laughter, but a certain charm, an agreeable air, that one can give to all sorts of subjects, even the most serious.']

## XVIII

### THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF VIKRAMADITYA

For many centuries in Indian history there was no city so famous as the city of Ujjain. It was always renowned as the seat of learning. Here lived at one time the poet Kalidas, one of the supreme poets of the world, fit to be named with Homer and Dante and Shakespeare. And here worked and visited, only a hundred and fifty years ago, an Indian king, who was also a great and learned astronomer, the greatest of his day, Rajah Jey Singh of Jeypore. So one can see what a great love all who care for India must feel for the ancient city of Ujjain.

But deep in the hearts of the Indian people, one name is held even dearer than those I have mentioned—the name of Vikramaditya, who became king of Malwa, it is said, in the year 57 before Christ. He was like our king Arthur, or like Alfred the Great—so strong and true and gentle that the men of his own day almost worshipped him, and those of all after times were obliged to give him the first place, though they had never looked in his face, nor appealed to his great and tender heart—simply because they could see that never king had been loved like this king. But one thing we do know about Vikramaditya. It is told of him that he was the greatest judge in history.

Never was he deceived. Never did he punish the wrong man. The guilty trembled when they came before him, for they knew that his eyes would look straight into their guilt. And those who had difficult questions to ask, and wanted to know the truth, were thankful to be allowed to come, for they knew that their king would never rest

till he understood the matter, and that then he would give an answer that would convince all. . . .

And so, in after time in India, when any judge pronounced sentence with great skill, it would be said of him, "Ah, he must have sat in the judgment-seat of Vikramaditya!" And this was the habit of speech of the whole country. Yet in Ujjain itself, the poor people forgot that the heaped-up ruins a few miles away had been his palace, and only the rich and learned, and the wise men who lived in kings' courts, remembered.

The story I am about to tell you happened long, long ago. In those days, the people of the villages, as they do still, used to send their cows out to the wild land to graze.

Early in the morning they would go, in the care of the shepherds, and not return till evening, close on dusk. How I wish I could show you that coming and going of the Indian cows!

Such gentle little creatures they are, with such large wise eyes, and a great hump between their shoulders! And they are not timid or wild, like our cattle. For in India, amongst the Hindus, every one loves them. They are very useful and precious in that hot, dry country, and no one is allowed to tease or frighten them. Instead of that, the little girls come at day-break and pet them, giving them food and hanging necklaces of flowers about their necks, saying poetry to them, and even strewing flowers before their feet! And the cows, for their part, seem to feel as if they belonged to the family, just as our cats and dogs do.

If they live in the country, they delight in being taken out to feed on the grass in the day-time; but of course some one must go with them, to frighten off wild beasts, and to see that they do not stray too far. They wear little tinkling bells, that ring as they move their heads, saying, "Here! here!" And when it is time to go home to the village for the night, what a pretty sight they make!

One cowherd stands and calls at the edge of the

pasture and another goes around behind the cattle, to drive them towards him, and so they come quietly forward from here and there, sometimes breaking down the brushwood in their path. And when the herdsmen are sure that all are safe, they turn homewards—one leading in front, one bringing up the rear, and the cows making a long procession between them. As they go they kick up the dust along the sun-baked path, till at last they seem to be moving through a cloud, with the last rays of the sunset touching it. And so the Indian people call twilight, cowdust, "the hour of cowdust." It is a very peaceful, a very lovely moment. All about the village can be heard the sound of the children playing. The men are seated, talking, round the foot of some old tree, and the women are gossiping or praying in their houses.

Tomorrow, before dawn, all will be up and hard at work again, but this is the time of rest and joy.

Such was the life of the shepherd boys in the villages about Ujjain. There were many of them, and in the long days on the pastures they had plenty of time for fun. One day they found a playground. Oh, how delightful it was! The ground under the trees was rough and uneven. Here and there the end of a great stone peeped out, and many of these stones were beautifully carven. In the middle was a green mound, looking like a judge's seat.

One of the boys thought so at least, and he ran forward with a whoop and seated himself on it. "I say, boys," he cried, "I'll be judge and you can all bring cases before me, and we'll have trials!" Then he straightened his face, and became very grave, to act the part of judge.

The others saw the fun at once, and, whispering amongst themselves, quickly made up some quarrel, and appeared before him, saying very humbly, "May your worship be pleased to settle between my neighbour and me which is in the right?" Then they stated the case, one



saying that a certain field was his, another that it was not, and so on.

But now a strange thing made itself felt. When the judge had sat down on the mound, he was just a common boy. But when he had heard the question, even to the eyes of the frolicsome lads, he seemed quite different. He was now full of gravity, and, instead of answering in fun, he took the case seriously, and gave an answer which in that particular case was perhaps the wisest that man had ever heard.

The boys were a little frightened. For though they could not appreciate the judgment, yet his tone and manner were strange and impressive. Still they thought it was fun, and went away again, and, with a good deal more whispering, concocted another case. Once more they put it to their judge, and once more he gave a reply, as it were out of the depth of a long experience, with incontrovertible wisdom. And this went on for hours and hours, he sitting on the judge's seat, listening to the questions propounded by the others, and always pronouncing sentence with the same wonderful gravity and power. Till at last it was time to take the cows home, and then he jumped down from his place, and was just like any other cowherd.

The boys could never forget that day, and whenever they heard of any perplexing dispute they would set this boy on the mound, and put it to him. And always the same thing happened. The spirit of knowledge and justice would come to him, and he would show them the truth. But when he came down from his seat, he would be no different from other boys.

Gradually the news of this spread through the country-side, and grown-up men and women from all the villages about that part would bring their law suits to be decided in the court of the herd-boys on the grass under the green trees. And always they received a judgment that both sides understood, and went away satisfied. So

all the disputes in that neighbourhood were settled.

Now Ujjain had long ceased to be a capital, and the king now lived very far away, hence it was some time before he heard the story. At last, however, it came to his ears. "Why," he said, "that boy must have sat on the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya!" He spoke without thinking, but all around him were learned men, who knew the chronicles. They looked at one another. "The king speaks the truth," they said; "the ruins in yonder meadows were once Vikramaditya's palace!"

Now this sovereign had long desired to be possessed with the spirit of law and justice. Every day brought its problems and difficulties to him, and he often felt weak and ignorant in deciding matters that needed wisdom and strength. "If sitting on the mound brings it to the shepherd boy," he thought, "let us dig deep and find the Judgment-Seat. I shall put it in the chief place in my hall of audience, and on it I shall sit to hear all cases. Then the spirit of Vikramaditya will descend on me also, and I shall always be a just judge!"

So men with spades and tools came to disturb the ancient peace of the pastures, and the grassy knoll where the boys had played was overturned. All about the spot were now heaps of earth and broken wood and upturned sod. And the cows had to be driven further afield. But the heart of the boy who had been judge was sorrowful, as if the very home of his soul were being taken away from him.

At last the labourers came on something. They uncovered it—a slab of black marble, supported on the hands and outspread wings of twenty-five stone angels, with their faces turned outwards as if for flight—surely the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya.

With great rejoicing it was brought to the city, and the king himself stood by while it was put in the chief place in the hall of justice. Then the nation was ordered

to observe three days of prayer and fasting, for on the fourth day the King would ascend the new throne publicly, and judge justly amongst the people.

At last the great morning arrived, and crowds assembled to see the Taking of the Seat. Pacing through the long hall came the judges and priests of the kingdom, followed by the sovereign. Then, as they reached the Throne of Judgment, they parted into two lines, and he walked up the middle, prostrated himself before it, and went close up to the marble slab.

When he had done this, however, and was just about to sit down, one of the twenty-five stone angels began to speak. "Stop!" it said: "Thinkest thou that thou art worthy to sit on the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya? Hast thou never desired to bear rule over kingdoms that were not thine own?" And the countenance of the stone angel was full of sorrow.

At these words the king felt as if a light had blazed up within him, and shown him a long array of tyrannical wishes. He knew that his own life was unjust. After a long pause he spoke. "No," he said, "I am *not* worthy."

"Fast and pray yet three days," said the angel, "that thou mayest purify thy will, and make good thy right to seat thyself thereon." And with these words it spread its wings and flew away. And when the king lifted up his face, the place of the speaker was empty, and only twenty-four figures supported the marble slab.

And so there was another three days of royal retreat, and he prepared himself with prayer and with fasting to come again and essay to sit on the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya.

But this time it was even as before. Another stone angel addressed him, and asked him a question which was yet more searching. "Hast thou *never*," it said, "coveted the riches of another?"

And when at last he spoke and said, "Yea, I have

done this thing; I am not worthy to sit on the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya." The angel commanded him to fast and pray yet another three days, and spread its wings and flew away into the blue.

At last four times twenty-four days had gone, and still three more days of fasting, and it was now the hundredth day. Only one angel was left supporting the marble slab, and the king drew near with great confidence. for to-day he felt sure of being allowed to take his place.

But as he drew near and prostrated, the last angel spoke: "Art thou, then, perfectly pure in heart, O King?" it said, "Is thy will like unto that of a little child? If so, thou art indeed worthy to sit on this seat!"

"No," said the King speaking very slowly, and once more searching his own conscience, as the judge examines the prisoner at the bar, but with great sadness; "no, I am not worthy."

And at these words the angel flew up into the air, bearing the slab upon his head, so that never since that day has it been seen upon the earth.

But when the King came to himself and was alone, pondering over the matter, he saw that the last angel had explained the mystery. Only he who was pure in heart like a little child, could be perfectly just. That was why the shepherd boy in the forest could sit where no king in the world might come, on the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya.

SISTER NIVEDITA. (1867—1911)

## XIX

### THE PIGEONS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

The front of the British Museum stands in the sunlight clearly marked against the firm blue of the northern sky. The blue appears firm as if solid above the angle of the stonework, for while looking towards it—towards the north—the rays do not come through the azure, which is therefore colour without life. It seems nearer than the southern sky, it descends and forms a close background to the building; as you approach you seem to come nearer to the blue surface rising at its rear. The dark edges of sloping stone are distinct and separate, but not sharp; the hue of the stone is toned by time and weather, and is so indefinite as to have lost its hardness. Those small rounded bodies upon the cornice are pigeons resting in the sun, so motionless and neutral-tinted that they might be mistaken for some portion of the carving. A double gilt ring, a circle in a circle, at the feet of an allegorical figure gleams brightly against the dark surface. The sky already seems farther away seen between the boles of stone, perpetual shade dwells in their depth, but two or three of the pigeons fluttering down are searching for food on the sunlit gravel at the bottom of the steps. To them the building is merely a rock, pierced with convenient caverns; they use its exterior for their purpose, but penetrate no farther. With air and light, the sunlit gravel, the green lawn between it and the outer railings—with these they are concerned. and with these only. The heavy roll of the traffic in Oxford Street, audible here, is nothing to them; the struggle for money does not touch them, they let it go by.

Nor the many minds searching and re-searching in the great Library, this mental toil is no more to them than the lading of the waggons in the street. Neither the tangible product nor the intellectual attainment is of any value—only the air and light. There are idols in the galleries within upon whose sculptured features the hot Eastern sun shone thousands of years since. They were made by human effort, however mistaken, and they were the outcome of human thought and handiwork. The doves fluttered about the temples in those days, full only of the air and light. They fluttered about the better temples of Greece and round the porticos where philosophy was born. Still only the light, the sunlight, the air of heaven. We labour on and think, and carve our idols and the pen never ceases from its labour; but the lapse of the centuries has left us in the same place. The doves who have not laboured nor travailed in thought possess the sunlight. Is not theirs the preferable portion?

The shade deepens as I turn from the portico to the hall and vast domed house of books. The half-hearted light under the dome is stagnant and dead. For it is the nature of light to beat and throb; it has a pulse and undulation like the swing of the sea. Under the trees in the woodlands it vibrates and lives; on the hills there is a resonance of light. It beats against every leaf, and, thrown back, beats again; it is agitated with the motion of the grass blades; you can feel it ceaselessly streaming on your face. It is renewed and fresh every moment, and never twice do you see the same ray. Stayed and checked by the dome and book-built walls, the beams lose their elasticity, and the ripple ceases in the motionless pool. The eyes, responding, forget to turn quickly, and only partially see. Deeper thought and inspiration quit the heart, for they can only exist where the light vibrates and communicates its tone to the soul. If any imagine they shall find thought in many books, certainly they will be disappointed.

Thought dwells by the stream and sea, by the hill and in the woodland, in the sunlight and free wind, where the wild dove haunts. Walls and roof shut it off as they shut off the undulation of light. The very lightning cannot penetrate here. A murkiness marks the coming of the cloud, and the dome becomes vague, but the fierce flash is shorn to a pale reflection, and the thunder is no more than the rolling of a heavier truck loaded with tomes. But in closing out the sky, with it is cut off all that the sky can tell you with its light, or in its passion of storm.

Sitting at these long desks and trying to read, I soon find that I have made a mistake; it is not here I shall find that which I seek. Yet the magic of books draws me here time after time, to be as often disappointed. Something in a book tempts the mind as pictures tempt the eye; the eye grows weary of pictures, but looks again. The mind wearies of books, yet cannot forget that once when they were first opened in youth they gave it hope of knowledge. Those first books exhausted, there is nothing left but words and covers. It seems as if all the books in the world—really books—can be bought for £ 10. Man's whole thought is purchasable at that small price, for the value of a watch, of a good dog. For the rest it is repetition and paraphrase. The grains of wheat were threshed out and garnered two thousand years since. Except the receipts of chemists, except specifications for the steam-engine, or the electric motor, there is nothing in these millions of books that was not known at the commencement of our era. Not a thought has been added. Continual threshing has widened out the heap of straw and spread it abroad, but it is empty. Nothing will ever be found in it. Those original grains of true thought were found beside the stream, the sea, in the sunlight, at the shady verge of woods. Let us leave this beating and turning-over of empty straw; let us return to the stream and the hills; let us ponder by night in view of the stars.

It is pleasant to go out again into the portico under the great columns. On the threshold I feel nearer knowledge than when within. The sun shines, and southwards above the houses there is a statue crowning the summit of some building. The figure is in the midst of the light; it stands out clear and white as if in Italy. The southern blue is luminous—the beams of light flow through it—the air is full of the undulation and life of light. There is rest in gazing at the sky; a sense that wisdom does exist and may be found, a hope returns that was taken away among the books. The green lawn is pleasant to look at, though it is mown so ruthlessly. If they would only let the grass spring up, there would be a thought somewhere entangled in the long blades as a dewdrop sparkles in their depths. Seats should be placed here, under the great columns or by the grass, so that one might enjoy the sunshine after books and watch the pigeons. They have no fear of the people, they come to my feet, but the noise of a door heavily swinging-to in the great building alarms them; they rise and float round, and return again. The sunlight casts a shadow of the pigeon's head and neck upon his shoulders: he turns his head, and the shadow of his beak falls on his breast. Iridescent gleams of bronze and green and blue play about his neck; blue predominates. His pink feet step so near, the red round his eye is visible. As he rises vertically, forcing his way in a straight line upwards, his wings almost meet above his back and again beneath the body; they are put forth to his full stroke. When his flight inclines and becomes gradually horizontal, the effort is less and the wing tips do not approach so closely.

They have not laboured in mental searching as we have; they have not wasted their time looking among empty straw for the grain that is not there. They have been in the sunlight. Since the days of ancient Greece the doves have remained in the sunshine; we who have



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laboured have found nothing. In the sunshine, by the shady verge of woods, by the sweet waters where the wild dove sips, there alone will thought be found.

RICHARD JEFFRIES. (1848—1887)

*From "The Life of the Fields."*

## XX

### THE ENGLISH CHARACTER

The English race are reputed morose. I do not know that they have sadder brows than their neighbours of northern climates. They are sad by comparison with the singing and dancing nations: not sadder, but slow and staid, as finding their joys at home. They, too, believe that where there is no enjoyment of life, there can be no vigour and art in speech or thought; that your merry heart goes all the way, your sad one tires in a mile. This trait of gloom has been fixed on them by French travellers, who, from Froissart, Voltaire, Le Sage, Mirabeau, down to the lively journalists of the *feuilletons*, have spent their wit on the solemnity of their neighbours. The French say, gay conversation is unknown in their island: the Englishman finds no relief from reflection except in reflection: when he wishes for amusement, he goes to work: his hilarity is like an attack of fever. Religion, the theatre, and the reading the books of his country, all feed and increase his natural melancholy. The police does not interfere with public diversions. It thinks itself bound in duty to respect the pleasures and rare gaiety of this inconsolable nation; and their well-known courage is entirely attributable to their disgust of life.

I suppose their gravity of demeanour and their few words have obtained this reputation. As compared with the Americans, I think them cheerful and contented. Young people, in this country, are much more prone to melancholy. The English have a mild aspect, and a ringing, cheerful voice. They are large-natured, and not so

easily amused as the southerners, and are among them as grown people among children, requiring war, or trade, or engineering, or science, instead of frivolous games. They are proud and private, and, even if disposed to recreation, will avoid an open garden.

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The reputatoin of taciturnity they have enjoyed for six or seven hundred years; and a kind of pride in bad public speaking is noted in the House of Commons, as if they were willing to show that they did not live by their tongues, or thought they spoke well enough if they had the tone of gentlemen. In mixed company, they shut their mouths. A Yorkshire mill-owner told me, he had ridden more than once all the way from Leeds, in the first-class carriage, with the same persons, and no word exchanged. The club-houses were established to cultivate social habits, and it is rare that more than two eat together, and oftenest one eats alone. Was it then a stroke of humour in the serious Swedenborg, or was it only his pitiless logic, that made him shut up the English souls in a heaven by themselves?

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But it is in the deep traits of race that the fortunes of nations are written, and however derived, whether a happier tribe or mixture of tribes, the air, or whatever circumstance, that mixed for them the golden mean of temperament—here exists the best stock in the world, broad-fronted, broad-bottomed, best for depth, range, and equability, men of aplomb and reserves, great range and many moods, strong instincts, yet apt for culture; war-class as well as clerks; earls and tradesmen; wise minority, as well as foolish majority; abysmal temperament, hiding wells of wrath, and glooms on which no sunshine settles; alternated with a common-sense and humanity which holds them fast to every piece of cheerful duty; making this temperament a sea to which all storms are superficial; a

race to which their fortunes flow, as if they alone had the elastic organization at once fine and robust enough for dominion; as if the burly inexpressive, now mute and contumacious, now fierce and sharp-tongued dragon, which once made the island light with his fiery breath, had bequeathed his ferocity to his conqueror. They hide virtues under vices, or the semblance of them. It is the misshapen Scandinavian troll again, who lifts the cart out of the mire, or "threshes the corn that ten day-labourers could not end," but it is done in the dark, and with muttered maledictions. He is a churl with a soft place in his heart, whose speech is a brash of bitter waters, but who loves to help you at a pinch. He says no, and serves you, and your thanks disgust him. Here was lately a cross-grained miser, odd and ugly, resembling in countenance the portrait of Punch, with the laugh left out; rich by his own industry; sulking in a lonely house; who never gave a dinner to any man, and disdained all courtesies; yet as true a worshipper of beauty in form and colour as ever existed, and profusely pouring over the cold mind of his countrymen creations of grace and truth, removing the reproach of sterility from English art, catching from their savage climate every fine hint, and importing into their galleries every tint and trait of sunnier cities and skies; making an era in painting; and, when he saw that the splendour of one of his pictures in the Exhibition dimmed his rivals that hung next it, secretly took a brush and blackened his own.

They do not wear their heart in their sleeve for daws to peck at. They have that phlegm or staidness, which it is a compliment to disturb. "Great men," said Aristotle, "are always of a nature originally melancholy." 'Tis the habit of a mind which attaches to abstractions with a passion which gives vast results. They dare to displease, they do not speak to expectation. They like the sayers of No, better than the sayers of Yes. Each of them has an

opinion which he feels it becomes him to express all the more that it differs from yours. They are meditating opposition. This gravity is inseparable from minds of great resources.

There is an English hero superior to the French, the German, the Italian, or the Greek. When he is brought to the strife with fate, he sacrifices a richer material possession, and on more purely metaphysical grounds. He is there with his own consent, face to face with fortune, which he defies. On deliberate choice and from grounds of character, he has elected his part to live and die for, and dies with grandeur. This race has added new elements to humanity, and has a deeper root in the world.

They have great range of scale, from ferocity to exquisite refinement. With larger scale, they have great retrieving power. After running each tendency to an extreme, they try another tack with equal heat. More intellectual than other races, when they live with other races, they do not take their language, but bestow their own. They subsidize other nations, and are not subsidized. They proselyte, and are not proselyted. They assimilate other races to themselves, and are not assimilated. The English did not calculate the conquest of the Indies. It fell to their character. So they administer in different parts of the world, the codes of every empire and race; in Canada, old French law; in the Mauritius, the Code Napoleon; in the West Indies, the edicts of the Spanish Cortes; in the East Indies, the Laws of Menu; in the Isle of Man, of the Scandinavian Thing; at the Cape of Good Hope, of the old Netherlands; and in the Ionian Islands, the Pandects of Justinian.

They are very conscious of their advantageous position in history. England is the lawgiver, the patron, the instructor, the ally. Compare the tone of the French and the English press: the first querulous, captious, sensitive, about English opinion; the English press is never timorous

about French opinion; but arrogant and contemptuous.

They are testy and headstrong through an excess of will and bias; churlish as men sometimes please to be who do not forget a debt, who ask no favours, and who will do what they like with their own. With education and intercourse these asperities wear off, and leave the goodwill pure. If anatomy is reformed according to national tendencies, I suppose the spleen will hereafter be found in the Englishman, not found in the American, and differencing the one from the other. I anticipate another anatomical discovery, that this organ will be found to be cortical and caducous, that they are superficially morose, but at last tender-hearted, herein differing from Rome and the Latin nations. Nothing savage, nothing mean resides in the English heart. They are subject to panics of credulity and of rage, but the temper of the nation, however disturbed, settles itself soon and easily, as, in this temperate zone the sky after whatever storms clears again, and serenity is its normal condition.

A saving stupidity masks and protects their perception as the curtain of the eagle's eye. Our swifter Americans, when they first deal with English, pronounce them stupid; but, later, do them justice as people who wear well, or hide their strength. To understand the power of performance that is in their finest wits, in the patient Newton, or in the versatile transcendent poets, or in the Dugdales, Gibbons, Hallams, Eldons, and Peels, one should see how English day-labourers hold out. High and low, they are of an unctuous texture. There is an adipocere in their constitution, as if they had oil also for their mental wheels, and could perform vast amounts of work without damaging themselves.

Even the scale of expense on which people live, and to which scholars and professional men conform, proves the tension of their muscle, when vast numbers are found who can each lift this enormous load. I might even add,

their daily feasts argue a savage rigour of body.

No nation was ever so rich in able men: "Gentlemen," as Charles I said of Strafford, "whose abilities might make a prince rather afraid than ashamed in the greatest affairs of state;" men of such temper, that, like Baron Vere, "had one seen him returning from a victory he would by his silence have suspected that he had lost the day; and, had he beheld him in a retreat, he would have collected him a conqueror by the cheerfulness of his spirit."

The following passage from the *Heimskringla* might almost stand for a portrait of the modern Englishman: "Haldor was very stout and strong, and remarkably handsome in appearance. King Harold gave him this testimony, that he, among all his men, cared least about doubtful circumstances, whether they betokened danger or pleasure; for, whatever turned up, he was never in higher nor in lower spirits, never slept less nor more on account of them, nor ate nor drank but according to his custom. Haldor was not a man of many words, but short in conversation, told his opinion bluntly, and was obstinate and hard; and this could not please the king, who had many clever people about him, zealous in his service. Haldor remained a short time with the king, and then came to Iceland, where he took up his abode in Hiardaholt, and dwelt in that farm to a very advanced age."

The national temper, in the civil history, is not flashy or whiffing. The slow, deep English mass smoulders with fire, which at last sets all its borders in flame. The wrath of London is not French wrath, but has a long memory, and in its hottest heat, a register and rule.

Half their strength they put not forth. They are capable of a sublime resolution, and if hereafter the war of races, often predicted, and making itself a war of opinions also (a question of despotism and liberty coming from Eastern Europe), should menace the English civilization, these sea-kings may take once again to their floating

castles, and find a new home and a second millennium of power in their colonies.

The stability of England is the security of the modern world. If the English race were as mutable as the French, what reliance? But the English stand for liberty. The conservative, money-loving, lord-loving English are yet liberty-loving; and so freedom is safe: for they have more personal force than other people. The nation always resist the immoral action of their government. They think humanely on the affairs of France, of Turkey, of Poland, of Hungary, of Schleswig Holstein, though overborne by the statecraft of the rulers at last.

Does the early history of each tribe show the permanent bias, which, though not less potent, is masked, as the tribe spreads its activity into colonies, commerce, codes, arts, letters? The early history shows it, as the musician plays the air which he proceeds to conceal in a tempest of variations. In Alfred, in the Northmen, one may read the genius of the English society, namely, that private life is the place of honour. Glory, a career, and ambition, words familiar to the longitude of Paris, are seldom heard in English speech. Nelson wrote from their hearts their homely telegraph, "England expects every man to do his duty."

For actual service, for the dignity of a profession, or to appease diseased or inflamed talent, the army and navy may be entered (the worst boys doing well in the navy); and the civil service, in departments where serious official work is done; and they hold in esteem the barrister engaged in the severer studies of the law. But the calm, sound, and most British Briton shrinks from public life, as charlatanism, and respects an economy founded on agriculture, coal-mines, manufactures, or trade, which secures an independence through the creation of real values.

They wish neither to command or obey, but to be kings in their own houses. They are intellectual, and deeply



enjoy literature; they like well to have the world served up to them in books, maps, models, and every mode of exact information, and, though not creators in the art, they value its **refinement**. They are ready for leisure, can direct and fill their own day, nor need so much as others the constraint of a necessity. But the history of the nation discloses, at every turn, this original predilection for private independence, and, however this inclination may have been disturbed by the bribes with which their vast colonial power has warped men out of orbit, the inclination endures, and forms and reforms the laws, letters, manners, and occupations. They choose that welfare which is compatible with the common-wealth, knowing that such alone is stable; as wise merchants prefer investments in three per cents.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON. (1803—1882)

## XXI

### REALITY

A couple of generations ago there was a sort of man going mournfully about who complained of the spread of education. He had an ill-ease in his mind. He feared that book learning would bring us no good, and he was called a fool for his pains. Not undeservedly—for his thoughts were muddled, and if his heart was good it was far better than his head. He argued badly or he merely affirmed, but he had strong allies (Ruskin was one of them), and, like every man who is sincere, there was something in what he said; like every type which is numerous, there was a human feeling behind him: and he was very numerous.

Now that he is pretty well extinct we are beginning to understand what he meant and what there was to be said for him. The greatest of the French Revolutionists was right—"After bread, the most crying need of the populace is knowledge." But what knowledge?

The truth is that secondary impressions, impressions gathered from books and from maps, are valuable as adjuncts to primary impressions (that is, impressions gathered through the channel of our senses), or, what is always almost as good, and sometimes better, the interpreting voice of the living man. For you must allow me the paradox that in some mysterious way the voice and gesture of a living witness always convey something of the real impressions he has had, and sometimes convey more than we should have received ourselves from our own sight and hearing of the thing related.

Well, I say, these secondary impressions are valuable as adjuncts to primary impressions. But when they stand absolute and have hardly any reference to primary impressions, then they may deceive. When they stand not only absolute but clothed with authority, and when they pretend to convince us even against our own experience, they are positively undoing the work which education was meant to do. When we receive them merely as an enlargement of what we know and make of the unseen things of which we read, things in the image of the seen, then they quite distort our appreciation of the world.

Consider so simple a thing as a river. A child learns its maps and knows, or thinks it knows, that such and such rivers characterize such and such nations and their territories. Paris stands upon the River Seine, Rome upon the River Tiber, New Orleans on the Mississippi, Toledo upon the River Tagus, and so forth. That child will know one river, the river near his home. And he will think of all those other rivers in its image. He will think of the Tagus and the Tiber and the Seine and the Mississippi—and they will all be the rivers near his home. Then let him travel, and what will he come across? The Seine, if he is from these islands, may not disappoint him or astonish him with a sense of novelty and of ignorance. It will indeed look grander and more majestic, seen from the enormous forest heights above its lower course, than what, perhaps, he had thought possible in a river, but still it will be a river of water out of which a man can drink, with clear-cut banks and with bridges over it, and with boats that ply up and down. But let him see the Tagus at Toledo, and what he finds is brown rolling mud, pouring solid after rains, or sluggish and hardly a river after long drought. Let him go down the Tiber, down the valley of the Tiber, on foot, and he will retain until the last miles an impression of nothing but a turbid mountain torrent, mixed with the friable soil in its bed. Let him

approach the Mississippi in the most part of its long course and the novelty will be more striking still. It will not seem to him a river at all (if he be from Northern Europe) ; it will seem a chance flood. He will come to it through marshes and through swamps, crossing a deserted back-water, finding firm land beyond, then coming to further shallow patches of wet, out of which the tree-stumps stand, and beyond which again mud-heaps and banks and groups of reeds leave undetermined, for one hundred yards after another, the limits of the vast stream. At last, if he has a boat with him, he may make some place where he has a clear view right across to low trees, tiny from their distance, similarly half swamped upon a further shore, and behind them a low escarpment of bare earth. That is the Mississippi nine times out of ten, and to an Englishman who had expected to find from his early reading or his maps a larger Thames it seems for all the world like a stretch of East Anglian flood, save that it is so much more desolate.

The maps are coloured to express the claims of Governments. What do they tell you of the social truth? Go on foot or bicycling through the more populated upland belt of Algiers and discover the curious mixture of security and war which no map can tell you of and which none of the geographies make you understand. The excellent roads, trodden by men that cannot make a road ; the walls as ready loopholed for fighting ; the Christian church and the mosque in one town ; the necessity for and the hatred of the European ; the indescribable difference of the sun, which here, even in winter, has something malignant about it, and strikes as well as warms ; the mountains odd, unlike our mountains ; the forests, which stand as it were by hardihood, and seem at war against the influence of dryness and the desert winds, with their trees far apart, and between them no grass, but bare earth alone.

So it is with the reality of arms and with the reality

of the sea. Too much reading of battles has ever unfitted men for war; too much talk of the sea is a poison in these great town populations of ours which know nothing of the sea. Who that knows anything of the sea will claim certitude in connexion with it? And yet there is a school which has by this time turned its mechanical system almost into a commonplace upon our lips, and talks of that most perilous thing, the fortunes of a fleet, as though it were a merely numerical and calculable thing! The greatest of Armadas may set out and not return.

There is one experience of travel and of the physical realities of the world which has been so widely repeated, and which men have so constantly verified that I could mention it as a last example of my thesis without fear of misunderstanding. I mean the quality of a great mountain.

To one that has never seen a mountain it may seem a full and fine piece of knowledge to be acquainted with its height in feet exactly, its situation; nay, many would think themselves learned if they know no more than its conventional name. But the thing itself! The curious sense of its isolation from the common world, of its being the habitation of awe, perhaps the brooding-place of a god!

I had seen many mountains, I had travelled in many places, and I had read many particular details in the books—and so well noted them upon the maps that I could have re-drawn the maps—concerning the Cerdagne. None the less the sight of that wall of the Cerdagne, when first it struck me, coming down the pass from Tourcarol, was as novel as though all my life had been spent upon empty plains. By the map it was 9,000 feet. It might have been 90,000! The wonderment as to what lay beyond, the sense that it was a limit to known things, its savage intangibility, its sheer silence! Nothing but the eye seeing could give one all those things.

The old complain that the young will not take advice. But the wisest will tell them that, save blindly and upon

authority, the young cannot take it. For most of human and social experience is words to the young, and the reality can come only with years. The wise complain of the jingo in every country; and properly, for he upsets the plans of statesmen, miscalculates the value of national forces, and may, if he is powerful enough, destroy the true spirit of armies. But the wise would be wiser still if, while they blamed the extravagance of this sort of man, they would recognize that it came from that half-knowledge of mere names and lists which excludes reality. It is maps and newspapers that turn an honest fool into a jingo.

It is so again with distance, and it is so with time. Men will not grasp distance unless they have traversed it, or unless it be represented to them vividly by the comparison of great landscapes. Men will not grasp historical time unless the historian shall be at the pains to give them what historians so rarely give, the measure of a period in terms of a human life. It is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that a contempt for the past arises, and that the fatal illusion of some gradual process of betterment or "progress" vulgarizes the minds of men and wastes their effort. It is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that a society imagines itself diseased when it is healthy, or healthy when it is diseased. And it is from secondary impressions divorced from reality that springs the amazing power of the little second-rate public man in those modern machines that think themselves democracies. This last is a power which, luckily, cannot be greatly abused, for the men upon whom it is thrust are not capable even of abuse upon a great scale. It is none the less marvellous in its falsehood.

Now you will say at the end of this: Since you blame so much the power for distortion and for ill residing in our great towns, in our system of primary education and in our papers and in our books, what remedy can you

propose? Why, none, either immediate or mechanical. The best and the greatest remedy is a true philosophy, which shall lead men always to ask themselves what they really know and in what order of certitude they know it; where authority actually resides and where it is usurped. But, apart from the advent, or rather the recapture, of a true philosophy by a European society, two forces are at work which will always bring reality back, though less swiftly and less whole. The first is the poet, and the second is Time.

Sooner or later Time brings the empty phrase and the false conclusion up against what is; the empty imaginary looks reality in the face and the truth at once conquers. In war a nation learns whether it is strong or no, and how it is strong and how weak; it learns it as well in defeat as in victory. In the long processes of human lives, in the succession of generations, the real necessities and nature of a human society destroy any false formula upon which it was attempted to conduct it. Time must always ultimately teach.

The poet, in some way it is difficult to understand (unless we admit that he is a seer), is also very powerful as the ally of such an influence. He brings out the inner part of things and presents them to men in such a way that they cannot refuse but must accept it. But how the mere choice and rhythm of words should produce so magical an effect, no one has yet been able to comprehend, and least of all the poets themselves.

HILAIRE BELLOC. (1870—

## XXII

### GREATNESS

You cannot substitute any epithet for great, when you are talking of great men. Greatness is not general dexterity, carried to any extent, for proficiency in any one subject of human endeavour. There are great astronomers, great scholars, great painters, even great poets, who are very far from great men. Greatness can do without success, and with it. William is greater in his retreats than Marlborough in his victories. On the other hand, the uniformity of Caesar's success does not dull his greatness. Greatness is not in the circumstances, but in the man.

What does this greatness then consist in? Not in a nice balance of qualities, purposes, and powers. That will make a happy man, a successful man, a man always in his right depth. Nor does it consist in absence of errors. We need only glance back at any list that can be made of great men, to be convinced of that. Neither does greatness consist in energy, though often accompanied by it. (Indeed, it is rather the breadth of the waters, than the force of the current, that we look to, to fulfil our idea of greatness.) There is no doubt that energy acting upon a nature endowed with the qualities that we sum up in the word cleverness, and directed to a few clear purposes, produces a great effect, and may sometimes be mistaken for greatness. If a man is mainly bent upon his own advancement, it cuts many a difficult knot of policy for him, and gives a force and distinctness to his mode of going on which looks grand. The same happens if he has one pre-eminent idea of any kind, even though it should be a narrow one.



Indeed, success in life is mostly gained by unity of purpose; whereas greatness often fails by reason of its having manifold purposes, but it does not cease to be greatness on that account.

If greatness can be shut up in qualities, it will be found to consist in courage and in openness of mind and soul.) These qualities may not seem at first to be so potent. But see what growth there is in them. The education of a man of open mind is never ended. Then, with openness of soul, a man sees some way into all other souls that come near him, feels with them, has their experience, is in himself a people. Sympathy is the universal solvent. Nothing is understood without it. The capacity of a man, at least for understanding, may almost be said to vary according to his powers of sympathy. Again, what is there that can counteract selfishness like sympathy? Selfishness may be hedged in by minute watchfulness and self-denial, but it is counteracted by the nature being encouraged to grow out and fix its tendrils upon foreign objects.

The immense defect that want of sympathy is, may be strikingly seen in the failure of the many attempts that have been made in all ages to construct the Christian character, omitting sympathy. It has produced numbers of people walking up and down one narrow plank of self-restraint, pondering over their own merits and demerits, keeping out, not the world exactly, but their fellow-creatures, from their hearts, and caring only to drive their neighbours before them on this plank of theirs, or to push them headlong. Thus with many virtues, and much hard work at the formation of character, we have splendid bigots or censorious small people.

(But sympathy is warmth and light too.) It is, as it were, the moral atmosphere connecting all animated natures. Putting aside, for a moment, the large differences that opinions, language, and education make between men, look at the innate diversity of character. Natural philo-

sophers were amazed when they thought they had found a newly-created species. But what is each man but a creature such as the world has not before seen? Then think how they pour forth in multitudinous masses, from princes delicately nurtured to little boys on scrubby commons or in dark cellars. How are these people to be understood, to be taught to understand, each other, but by those who have the deepest sympathies with all? There cannot be a great man without large sympathy. There may be men who play loud-sounding parts in life without it, as on the stage, where kings and great people sometimes enter, who are only characters of secondary import—deputy great men. But the interest and the instruction lie with those who have to feel and suffer most.

Add courage to this openness we have been considering: and you have a man who can own himself in the wrong, can forgive, can trust, can adventure, can, in short, use all the means that insight and sympathy endow him with.

I see no other essential characteristics in the greatness of nations than there are in the greatness of individuals. Extraneous circumstances largely influence nations as individuals; and make a larger part of the show of the former than of the latter; as we are wont to consider no nation great that is not great in extent or resources as well as in character. But of two nations, equal in other respects, the superiority must belong to the one which excels in courage and openness of mind and soul.

(Again, in estimating the relative merits of different periods of the world, we must employ the same tests of greatness that we use to individuals. To compare, for instance, the present and the past. What astounds us most in the past is the wonderful intolerance and cruelty: a constantly turning upon the inventors; and intolerance provoking ruin to the thing it would foster) The most admirable precepts are thrown from time to time upon this

cauldron of human affairs, and oftentimes they only seem to make it blaze the higher. We find men devoting the best part of their intellects to the invariable annoyance and persecution of their fellows. You might think that the earth brought forth with more abundant fruitfulness in the past than now, seeing that men found so much time for cruelty, but that you read of famines and privations which these latter days cannot equal. The recorded violent deaths amount to millions. And this is but a small part of the matter. Consider the modes of justice, the use of torture, for instance. What must have been the blinded state of the wise persons (wise for their day), who used torture. Did they ever think themselves 'what should we not say if we were subjected to this?' Many times they must really have desired to get at the truth: and such was their mode of doing it. Now, at the risk of being thought a 'laudator' of time present, I would say, here is the element of greatness we have made progress in. (We are more open in mind and soul. We have arrived (some of us at least) at the conclusion that men may honestly differ without offence. We have learned to pity each other more. There is a greatness in modern toleration which our ancestors knew not.)

(Then comes the other element of greatness, courage. Have we made progress in that?) This is a much more dubious question. The subjects of terror vary so much in different times that it is difficult to estimate the different degrees of courage shown in resisting them. (Men fear public opinion now as they did in former times the star-chamber: and those awful goddesses, Appearances, are to us what the Fates were to the Greeks.) It is hardly possible to measure the courage of a modern against that of an ancient: but I am unwilling to believe but that (enlightenment must strengthen courage.)

The application of the tests of greatness, as in the above instance, is a matter of detail, and of nice apprecia-

tion, as to the results of which men must be expected to differ largely: the tests themselves remain invariable—openness of nature to admit the light of love and reason, and courage to pursue it.

SIR ARTHUR HELPS. (1813—1875)

## XXIII

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

I cannot but think that the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature; when the savage first learned that the fingers of one hand are fewer than those of both; that it is shorter to cross a stream than to head it; that a stone stops where it is unless it is moved, and that it drops from the hand which lets it go; that light and heat come and go with the sun; that sticks burn away in a fire; that plants and animals grow and die; that if he struck his fellow savage a blow he would make him angry, and perhaps get a blow in return, while if he offered him a fruit he would please him, and perhaps receive a fish in exchange. When men had acquired this much knowledge, the outlines, rude though they were, of mathematics, of physics, of chemistry, of biology, of moral, economical, and political science, were sketched. Nor did the germ of religion fail when science began to bud.

Thus it seems impossible to imagine but that the foundations of all knowledge—secular or sacred—were laid when intelligence dawned, though the superstructure remained for long ages so slight and feeble as to be compatible with the existence of almost any general view respecting the mode of governance of the universe. No doubt, from the first, there were certain phenomena which, to the rudest mind, presented a constancy of occurrence, and suggested that a fixed order ruled, at any rate, among them. I doubt if the grossest of Fetish worshippers ever

imagined that a stone must have a god within it to make it fall, or that a fruit had a god within it to make it taste sweet. With regard to such matters as these, it is hardly questionable that mankind from the first took strictly positive and scientific views.

But, with respect to all the less familiar occurrences which present themselves, uncultured man, no doubt, has always taken himself as the centre and measure of the world; nor could he well avoid doing so. And finding that his apparently uncaused will has a powerful effect in giving rise to many occurrences, he naturally enough ascribed other and greater events to other and greater wills, and came to look upon the world and all that therein is, as the product of the wills of persons like himself, but stronger, and capable of being appeased or angered, as he himself might be soothed or irritated.

Through such conceptions of the plan and working of the universe all mankind have passed, or are passing. And we may now consider what has been the effect of the improvements of natural knowledge on the views of men who have reached this stage, and who have begun to cultivate natural knowledge with no desire but that of "increasing God's honour and bettering man's estate."

For example, what could seem wiser to an ancient people, than that they should learn the exact succession of the seasons, as warnings for their husbandmen; or the position of the stars, as guides to their rude navigators? But what has grown out of this search for natural knowledge of so merely useful a character? You all know the reply. Astronomy,—which of all sciences has filled men's minds with general ideas of a character most foreign to their daily experience, and has, more than any other, rendered it impossible for them to accept the beliefs of their fathers. Astronomy,—which tells them that this so vast and seemingly solid earth is but an atom among atoms, whirling no man knows whither, through illimit-

able space; which demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heaven above us, is but that space, filled by an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea; which opens up to us infinite regions where nothing is known, or ever seems to have been known, but matter and force, operating according to rigid rules; which leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conceptions of time, infinitely remote, and that the end is as immeasurably distant.

But it is not alone those who pursue astronomy who ask for bread and receive ideas. What more harmless than the attempt to lift and distribute water by pumping it; what more absolutely and grossly utilitarian? Yet out of pumps grew the discussions about Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; and then it was discovered that Nature does not abhor a vacuum, but that air has weight; and that notion paved the way for the doctrine that all matter has weight, and that the force which produces weight is co-extensive with the universe,—in short, to the theory of universal gravitation: while learning how to handle gases led to the discovery of oxygen, and to modern chemistry, and to the notion of the indestructibility of matter.

Again, what simpler, or more absolutely practical, than the attempt to keep the axle of a wheel from heating when the wheel turns round very fast? How useful for carters and drivers of carriages to know something about this; and how good it would be if any ingenious person would find out the cause of such phenomena. Such an ingenious person was Count Rumford; and he and his successors have landed us in the theory of the persistence, or indestructibility, of energy. And in the infinitely minute, as in the infinitely great, the seekers after natural knowledge of the kinds called physical and chemical, have

everywhere found a definite order and succession of events which seem never to be infringed.<sup>1</sup>

And how has it fared with Medicine and Anatomy? Have the anatomist, the physiologist, or the physician, whose business it has been to devote themselves assiduously to that eminently practical and direct end, the alleviation of the sufferings of mankind,—have they been able to **confine** their vision more absolutely to the strictly useful? I fear they are the worst offenders of all. For if the astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space, and the practical eternity of the duration of the universe; if the physical and chemical philosophers have demonstrated the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts, and the practical eternity of matter and of energy; and if both have alike proclaimed the universality of a definite and predicable order and succession of events, the workers in biology have not only accepted all these, but have added more startling theses of their own. For, as the astronomers discover the earth to be no centre of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalists find man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the astronomer observes the mark of practically endless time set upon the arrangement of the solid system, so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages, which, in relation to human experience, are infinite.

Such are a few of the new conceptions implanted in our minds by the improvement of natural knowledge. Men have acquired the ideas of the practically infinite extent of the universe and of its practical eternity; they are familiar with the conception that our earth is but an infinitesimal fragment of that part of the universe which can be seen; and that, nevertheless, its duration is, as compared with our standards of time, infinite. They have further acquired the idea that man is but one of innumer-



able forms of life now existing on the globe, and that the present existences are but the last of an immeasurable series of predecessors. Moreover, every step they have made in natural knowledge has tended to extend and fix in their minds the conception of a definite order of the universe—which is embodied in what are called, by an unhappy metaphor, the laws of Nature—and to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order itself.

Whether these ideas are well or ill founded is not the question. No one can deny that they exist, and have been the inevitable outgrowth of the improvement of natural knowledge. And if so, it cannot be doubted that they are changing the form of men's most cherished and most important convictions.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY. (1825—1895)

## XXIV

### THE METHOD OF SCIENCE

The method of scientific investigation is nothing but the expression of the necessary mode of working of the human mind. It is simply the mode in which all phenomena are reasoned about, rendered precise and exact. There is just the same kind of difference, between the mental operations of a man of science and those of an ordinary person, as there is between the operations and methods of a baker or of a butcher weighing out his goods in common scales, and the operations of a chemist in performing a difficult and complex analysis by means of his balance and finely graduated weights. It is not that the action of the scales in the one case, and the balance in the other, differ in the principles of their construction or manner of working; but the beam of one is set on an infinitely finer axis than the other, and of course, turns by the addition of a much smaller weight.

You will understand this better, perhaps, if I give you some familiar example. You have all heard it repeated, I dare say, that men of science work by means of Induction and Deduction, and that by the help of these operations, they, in a sort of sense, wring from Nature certain other things, which are called Natural Laws, and Causes, and that out of these, by some cunning skill of their own, they build up Hypotheses and Theories. And it is imagined by many, that the operations, of the common mind can be by no means compared with these processes, and that they have to be acquired by a sort of special apprenticeship to the craft. To hear all these large words,

you would think that the mind of a man of science must be constituted differently from that of his fellow-men; but if you will not be frightened by terms, you will discover that you are quite wrong, and that all these terrible apparatus are being used by yourselves every day and every hour of your lives.

There is a well-known incident in one of Molière's plays, where the author makes the hero express unbounded delight on being told that he had been talking prose during the whole of his life. In the same way, I trust, that you will take comfort, and be delighted with yourselves, on the discovery that you have been acting on the principles of inductive and deductive philosophy during the same period. Probably there is not one here who has not in the course of the day had occasion to set in motion a complex train of reasoning, of the very same kind, though differing of course in degree, as that which a scientific man goes through in tracing the causes of natural phenomena.

A very trivial circumstance will serve to exemplify this. Suppose you go into a fruiterer's shop, wanting an apple,—you take up one, and, on biting it, you find it is sour; you look at it, and see that it is hard and green. You take up another one, and that too is hard, green and sour. The shopman offers you a third; but, before biting it, you examine it, and find that it is hard and green, and you immediately say that you will not have it, as it must be sour, like those you have already tried.

Nothing can be more simple than that, you think; but if you will take the trouble to analyse and trace out into its logical elements what has been done by the mind, you will be greatly surprised. In the first place, you have performed the operation of Induction. You found that, in two experiences, hardness and greenness in apples went together with sourness. It was so in the first case, and it was confirmed by the second. True, it is a very small basis, but still it is enough to make an induction from; you

generalize the facts, and you expect to find sourness in apples where you get hardness and greenness. You found upon that a general law, that all hard and green apples are sour; and that so far as it goes, is a perfect induction. Well, now, suppose, having got your law, that at some time afterwards, you are discussing the qualities of apples with a friend: you will say to him, "It is a very curious thing,—but I find that all hard and green apples are sour!" Your friend says to you, "But how do you know that?" You at once reply, "Oh, because I have tried them over and over again, and have always found them to be so."

Well, if we were talking science instead of common sense, we should call that an *Experimental Verification*. And, if still opposed, you go further, and say, "I have heard from the people in Somersetshire and Devonshire, where a large number of apples are grown, that they have observed the same thing. It is also found to be the case in Normandy, and in North America. In short, I find it to be the universal experience of mankind wherever attention has been directed to the subject." Whereupon, your friend, unless he is a very unreasonable man, agrees with you, and is convinced that you are quite right in the conclusion you have drawn. He believes, although perhaps he does not know he believes it, that the more extensive verifications are,—that the more frequently experiments have been made, and results of the same kind arrived at,—that the more varied the conditions under which the same results are attained, the more certain is the ultimate conclusion, and he disputes the question no further. He sees that the experiment has been tried under all sorts of conditions, as to time, place, and people, with the same result; and he says with you, therefore, that the law you have laid down must be a good one, and he must believe it.

In science we do the same thing;—the philosopher exercises precisely the same faculties, though in a much more delicate manner. In scientific enquiry it becomes a

matter of duty to expose a supposed law to every possible kind of verification, and to take care, moreover, that this is done intentionally, and not left to a mere accident, as in the case of the apples. And in science, as in common life, our confidence in a law is in exact proportion to the absence of variation in the result of our experimental verifications.

For instance, if you let go your grasp of an article you may have in your hand, it will immediately fall to the ground. That is a very common verification of one of the best established laws of nature—that of gravitation. The method by which men of science establish the existence of that law is exactly the same as that by which ~~we~~ we have established the trivial proposition about the sourness of hard and green apples. But we believe it in such an extensive, thorough and unhesitating manner because the universal experience of mankind verifies it, and we can verify it ourselves at any time; and that is the strongest possible foundation on which any natural law can rest.

T. H. HUXLEY.

## XXV

### BOOKS AND HOW TO READ THEM

For all books are divisible into two classes, the books of the hour, and the books of all time. Mark this distinction—it is not one of quality only. It is not merely the bad book that does not last, and the good one that does. It is a distinction of species. There are good books for the hour, and good ones for all time; bad books for the hour, and bad ones for all time. I must define the two kinds before I go farther.

The good book of the hour, then,—I do not speak of the bad ones—is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar characteristic and possession of the present age: we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use, if we allow them to usurp the place of true books: for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, today: whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but

assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talked thing, but a written thing; and written, not with the view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would—the volume is mere *multiplication* of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead: that is mere *conveyance* of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to preserve it. 'The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it.' He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly, at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him;—this the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, "This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapour, and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." That is his "writing;" it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a, "Book."

(Perhaps you think no books were ever so written?)

But, again, I ask you, do you at all believe in honesty, or at all in kindness? or do you think there is never any

honesty or benevolence in wise people? None of us, I hope, are so unhappy as to think that. Well, whatever bit of a wise man's work is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book, or his piece of art. It is mixed always with evil fragments—ill-done, redundant, affected work. But if you read rightly, you will easily discover the true bits, and those *are* the books.

Now books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men:—by great leaders, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice; and life is short. You have heard as much before;—yet have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that—that what you lose today you cannot gain tomorrow? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourselves that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect that you jostle with the common crowd for *entrée* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested, and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

“The place you desire,” and the place you *fit yourself for*, I must also say; because, observe, (this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this:—it is open to labour and to merit, but to nothing else). No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian



of those Elysian gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the *portières* of that silent Faubourg St. Germain, there is but brief question: "Do you deserve to enter? Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms?—no. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerate pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognise our presence."

This, then, is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are to be among them. No ambition is of any use. They scorn your ambition. You must love them, and show your love in these two following ways:—

First, by a true desire to be taught by them, and to enter into their thoughts. To enter into theirs, observe; not to find your own expressed by them. If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects.

Very ready we are to say of a book, "How good this is—that's exactly what I think!" But the right feeling is, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day." But whether thus submissively or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours. (Judge it afterwards, if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first.) (And be sure also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once;—nay, that at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise.

Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words too; but he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, will not, but in a hidden way and in parables, in order that he may be sure you want it.) I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyse that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it you by way of help, but of reward, and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where: you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any.

And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, "Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?" And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and melt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

And, therefore, first of all, I tell you, earnestly and authoritatively (*I know* I am right in this), you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable—nay, letter by letter. For though it is only by reason of opposition of letters in the function of signs, to sounds in the function of signs, that the study of books is called “literature,” and that a man versed in it is called, by the consent of nations, a man of letters instead of a man of books, or of words, you may yet connect with that accidental nomenclature this real principle:—that you might read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough), and remain an utterly “illiterate,” uneducated person; but that if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter,—that is to say, with real accuracy,—you are for evermore in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as regards the merely intellectual part of it), consists in this accuracy. A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages,—may not be able to speak any but his own,—may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly; above all, he is learned in the peerage of words; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern canaille; remembers all their ancestry—their intermarriages, distantest relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the national noblesse of words at any time, and in any country. But an uneducated person may know by memory any number of languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any,—not a word even of his own. An ordinarily clever and sensible seaman will be able to make his way ashore at most ports; yet he has only to speak a sentence of any language to be known for an illiterate person: so also the accent, or turn of expression of a single sentence will at once mark a scholar.

JOHN RUSKIN. (1819—1900)

## XXVI

### ON READING BOOKS

The philosopher said that reading makes a full mind. Not always. And perhaps not even generally. The effect of reading on the mind depends on the manner and spirit in which you read.

Some of the emptiest minds I ever met belonged to certain women who got a book out of the lending library every week-day of their lives—and read it through within the ensuing twenty-four hours. Part of their daily routine was to visit the library to ‘change the book.’ No particular book of a particular author! No remembered title! But just ‘the book!’ I have calculated that such regular and tireless readers would read twenty million words or more in a year. Great scholars probably read less than they. Walter Savage Landor, whose knowledge was prodigious and amazing, said that only four years of his life were given up to study, and that even in those years he never allowed reading to interfere with his other pleasures.

And yet these one-day one-book maniacs notoriously have vacant heads.

It may be argued that they read the wrong kind of stuff—for instance, ‘trashy novels.’ Well, I am not aware that novels are more trashy than other forms of literature. And novels are not trashy. A considerable proportion of them are rather good—thought-provoking, sympathy-quicken-  
ing, intellectually stimulating. It is indeed impossible that a confirmed reader should read nothing but trash. She simply could not avoid picking up a good novel now

and then. Moreover, the one-day one-book maniacs do not confine themselves to novels. They gobble biographies, essays, reminiscences, and historical works at intervals.

So that the explanation of the perfect vacancy of their minds cannot lie in what they read. Hence it must lie in how they read. And it does. The fact is, they read with the minimum of mental effort. They read as they might absorb coffee or chew gum or play patience. They read to lose themselves instead of reading to find themselves. They read to dull the brain and not to vitalise it. They object to being roused. I have heard them protest indignantly:

'But I couldn't put the book down. I don't want any more of that man—he's too exciting.

They have a faint desire to know 'what happened,' but the desire must not be more than faint. They refuse to yield themselves to their author. Their scheme is to understand him as little as may be. Their scheme is to employ him as a drug.

All which behaviour is highly strange, nearly incredible; but that large numbers of readers really do behave in this way cannot be doubted, and the phenomenon amounts to a proof that reading does not necessarily make a full mind.

You may say that you are not a student, that when you read you read purely for recreation and for pleasure, and that in this affair you are not 'out' for a full mind. You may even assert that your mind is already overburdened.

This seems to me to be quite a permissible attitude. Every man has a right, if he is so inclined, to read purely for recreation, and the majority of persons do in truth read purely for recreation. But when you are in search of recreation you may as well get the best recreation you can. The game of golf is a recreation and nothing else for ninety-nine golfers out of a hundred. But golfers do not

play golf anyhow. They do not say:

'I am golfing for fun, and I have no intention of taking trouble over it. I don't care a fig about stance, or swing, or eye. I mean to play any old way.'

On the contrary, they usually approach the game with much earnestness. They put their wits into it. They deliberately learn from players better than themselves. They worry about it. They talk endlessly about it. Some of them take it at least as seriously as they take their vocation in life. And they are right, within reason, for the more seriously they play golf the more efficacious and delightful does golf become as recreation. You cannot get proper recreation out of any activity unless you honestly work at it. If you don't put your back into it you defeat your own purpose, and are convicted of being absurd. This is just as true of reading as it is of golf.

In reading it is the attitude of the reader that matters more than his intelligence. A reader with the right attitude but with only moderate intelligence is likely to get more out of any book than a reader with better intelligence but with the wrong attitude.

If a reader's position is that he reads to pass the time, it may be answered to him that whether he reads wisely or stupidly he will still pass the time, and that as to read wisely is much more diverting and recreative than to read stupidly, he may just as well read wisely—that is to say he may just as well read with his full brain as with half his brain.

Of course a given reader, reading with all the honesty of intention of which he is capable, may discover that a book with a great reputation means nothing to him, for not all sincere persons can appreciate all fine books. In that case he should drop the book; he is wasting energy and goodwill upon it, and the sooner he ceases to do so the better. Every convinced reader leaves behind him numbers of books unfinished.

The success of a book with a reader is to be measured by its effect upon the actual daily existence of the reader. If a book excites thought; if it stimulates the sense of beauty, the sense of pity, the sense of sympathy, if it helps in any way towards the understanding of one's fellow-creatures; if it moves to laughter or to tears; if it increases the general vitality; if it throws light on dark problems; if it awakens the conscience and thus directly influences personal conduct,—if it accomplishes any of these things, then it has succeeded. If it does none of these things, but rather the opposite of these things, then it has failed.

The aim of reading as a whole is gradually to create an ideal life, a sort of secret, precious life, a refuge, a solace, an eternal source of inspiration, in the soul of the reader. All habitual, impassioned readers are aware of this secret life within them due to books; it brings about a feeling of security amid the insecurities of the world; it is like an insurance policy, a sound balance at the bank, a life-boat in a rough sea.

Although some principle in the choice of books for reading is admirable, and is indeed almost certain in the end to establish itself naturally, even if it is not settled in advance, I am not in favour of too much rigidity in this matter. In particular, I do not care for 'courses of study.' My subject is reading for pleasure, diversion, relaxation. I object to the very ideas in the word, 'courses' and the word 'study.' They have in them the seeds of the ghastliest of mental afflictions—priggishness. Let the reader read with his whole heart, and he may safely browse at will in the immense pasture of literature. He may get only a little in one particular field and only a little in another, but what he gets will not be a smattering; it will be thorough within its scope.

ARNOLD BENNETT. (1867—1931)

## XXVII

### A COLLEGE MAGAZINE

All through my boyhood and youth I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use, it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

This was all excellent, no doubt; so were the diaries I sometimes tried to keep, but always and very speedily discarded, finding them a school of posturing and melancholy self-deception. And yet this was not the most efficient part of my training. Good though it was, it only



taught me (so far as I have learned them at all) the lower and less intellectual elements of the art, the choice of the essential note and the right word: things that to a happier constitution had perhaps come by nature. And regarded as training, it had one grave defect; for it set me no standard of achievement. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labours at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann. I remember one of these monkey tricks, which was called "The Vanity of Morals:" it was to have had a second part, "The Vanity of Knowledge;" and as I had neither morality nor scholarship, the names were apt; but the second part was never attempted, and the first part was written (which is my reason for recalling it, ghostlike, from its ashes) no less than three times: first in the manner of Hazlitt, second in the manner of Ruskin, who had cast on me a passing spell, and third, in a laborious pasticcio of Sir Thomas Browne. So with my other works: . . . . .

That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write: whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats's; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back

to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out: "But this is not the way to be original!" It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. There can be none more original than Montaigne, neither could any be more unlike Cicero; yet no craftsman can fail to see how much the one must have tried in his time to imitate the other. Burns is the very type of a prime force in letters: he was of all men the most imitative. Shakespeare himself, the imperial, proceeds directly from a school. It is only from a school that we can expect to have good writers; it is almost invariably from a school that great writers, these lawless exceptions, issue. Nor is there anything here that should astonish the considerate. Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the student should have tried all that are possible; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of language, he should long have practised the literary scales; and it is only after years of such gymnastic that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

And it is the great point of these imitations that there still shines beyond the student's reach his inimitable model. Let him try as he please, he is still sure of failure; and it is a very old and a very true saying that failure is the only highroad to success. I must have had some disposition to learn; for I clear-sightedly condemned my own performances. I liked doing them indeed; but when they were done, I could see they were rubbish. In consequence, I very rarely showed them even to my friends; and such friends as I chose to be my confidants I must have chosen well, for they had the friendliness to be quite plain with me. "Padding," said one. Another

wrote: "I cannot understand why you do lyrics so badly." No more could I! Thrice I put myself in the way of a more authoritative rebuff, by sending a paper to a magazine. These were returned; and I was not surprised or even pained. If they had not been looked at, as (like all amateurs) I suspected was the case, there was no good in repeating the experiment; if they had been looked at—well, then I had not yet learned to write, and I must keep on learning and living. Lastly, I had a piece of good fortune which is the occasion of this paper, and by which I was able to see my literature in print, and to measure experimentally how far I stood from the favour of the public.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. (1850—1894)

## XXVIII

### THE DESERT.

The manner of my daily march was this. At about an hour before dawn, I rose, and made the most of about a pint of water which I allowed myself for washing. Then I breakfasted upon tea and bread. As soon as the beasts were loaded, I mounted my camel and pressed forward. My poor Arabs being on foot would sometimes moan with fatigue, and pray for rest, but I was anxious to enable them to perform their contract for bringing me to Cairo within the stipulated time, and I did not therefore allow a halt until the evening came. About midday or soon after, Mysseri used to bring up his camel alongside of mine and supply me with a piece of the dried bread softened in water, and also (as long as it lasted) with a piece of the tongue. After this there came into my hand (how well I remember it!) the little tin cup half filled with wine and water.

As long as you are journeying in the interior of the Desert you have no particular point to make for as your resting place. The endless sands yield nothing but small stunted shrubs; even these fail after the first two or three days, and from that time you pass over broad plains—you pass over newly reared hills—you pass through valleys dug out by the last week's storm, and the hills and the valleys are sand, sand, sand, still sand, and only sand, and sand and sand again. The earth is so samely, that your eyes turn towards heaven—towards heaven, I mean, in sense of sky. You look to the sun for he is your taskmaster, and by him you know the measure of the work that you

have done, and the measure of the work that remains for you to do. He comes when you strike your tent in the early morning, and then, for the first hour of the day, as you move forward on your camel, he stands at your near side, and makes you know that the whole day's toil is before you; then for a while, and a long while, you see him no more, for you are veiled and shrouded, and dare not look upon the greatness of his glory, but you know where he strides over-head, by the touch of his flaming sword. No words are spoken, but your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, and for sights you see the pattern and the web of the silk that veils your eyes, and the glare of the outer light. Time labours on—your skin glows, your shoulders ache, your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, and you see the same pattern in the silk, and the same glare of light beyond; but conquering time marches on, and by and by the descending sun has compassed the heaven, and now softly touches your right arm, and throws your lank shadow over the sand right along on the way for Persia. Then again you look upon his face, for his power is all veiled in his beauty, and the redness of flames has become the redness of roses; the fair, wavy cloud that fled in the morning now comes to his sight once more—comes blushing—yet still comes on—comes burning with blushes, yet comes and clings to his side.

Then begins your season of rest. The world about you is all your own, and there, where you will, you pitch your solitary tent; there is no living thing to dispute your choice. When at last the spot had been fixed upon and we came to a halt, one of the Arabs would touch the chest of my camel, and utter at the same time a peculiar gurgling sound. The beast instantly understood and obeyed the sign, and slowly sank under me, till she brought her body to a level with the ground: then gladly enough I alighted. The rest of the camels were unloaded and turned loose to browse upon the shrubs of the Desert, where shrubs there

were, or where these failed, to wait for the small quantity of food that was allowed them out of our stores.

My servants, helped by the Arabs, busied themselves in pitching the tent and kindling the fire. Whilst this was doing I used to walk away towards the East, confiding in the print of my foot as a guide for my return. Apart from the cheering voices of my attendants, I could better know and feel the loneliness of the Desert. The influence of such scenes, however, was not of a softening kind, but filled me rather with a sort of childish exaltation in the self-sufficiency which enabled me to stand thus alone in the wideness of Asia—a short-lived pride, for wherever man wanders, he still remains tethered by the chain that links him to his kind; and so when the night closed round me, I began to return—to return as it were to my own gate. Reaching at last some high ground, I could see, and see with delight, the fire of our small encampment; and when, at last, I regained the spot, it seemed a very home that had sprung up for me in the midst of these solitudes. My Arabs were busy with their bread,—Mysseri rattling tea-cups,—the little kettle with her odd, old-maidish looks sat humming away old songs about England, and two or three yards from the fire my tent stood prim and tight with open portal, and with welcoming look.

Sometimes in the earlier part of my joureny the night breeze blew coldly; when that happened, the dry sand was heaped up outside round the skirts of the tent, and so the wind that everywhere else could sweep as he listed along those dreary plains, was forced to turn aside in his course for me. Then within my tent there were heaps of luxuries—dining-rooms, dressing-rooms, libraries, bedrooms, drawing-rooms, oratories, all crowded in the space of a hearth-rug. The first night, I remember, with my books and maps about me, I wanted a light. They brought me a taper, and immediately from out of the silent Desert there rushed in a flood of life, unseen before. Monsters

of moths of all shapes and hues, that never before perhaps had looked upon the shining of a flame, now madly thronged into my tent, and dashed through the fire of the candle till they fairly extinguished it with their burning limbs. Those who had failed in attaining this martyrdom suddenly became serious, and clung despondingly to the canvas.

By and by there was brought to me the fragrant tea, and big masses of scorched and scorching toast, and the butter, that had come all the way to me in this Desert of Asia, from out of that poor, dear, starving Ireland. I feasted like a king,—like four kings,—like a boy in the fourth form.

When the cold, sullen morning dawned, and my people began to load the camels, I always felt loath to give back to the waste this little spot of ground that had glowed for a while with the cheerfulness of a human dwelling. One by one the cloaks, the saddles, the baggage, the hundred things that strewed the ground and made it look so familiar—all these were taken away, and laid upon the camels. A speck in the broad tracts of Asia remained still impressed with the mark of patent portmanteaus and the heels of London boots; the embers of the fire lay black and cold upon the sand; and these were the signs we left.

My tent was spared to the last, but when all else was ready for the start, then came its fall; the pegs were drawn, the canvas shivered, and in less than a minute there was nothing that remained of my genial home but only a pole and a bundle. (The encroaching Englishman was off, and instant upon the fall of the canvas, like an owner who had waited and watched. the Genius of the Desert stalked in.)

A. W. KINGLAKE. (1809—1891)

## XXIX

### BY RIVERS AND STREAMS

Running water has a charm all its own; it proffers companionship of which one never tires, it adapts itself to moods; it is the guardian of secrets. It has cool draughts for the thirsty soul as well as for drooping flowers; and they who wander in the garden of God with listening ears learn of its many voices.

When the strain of a working day has left me weary, perhaps troubled and perplexed, I find my way to the river. I step into a boat and pull upstream until the exertion has refreshed me; and then I make fast to the old alder-stump where last year the reed-piper nested, and lie back in the stern and think.

The water laps against the keel as the boat rocks gently in the current; the river flows past, strong and quiet. There are side eddies, of course, and little disturbing whirlpools near the big stones, but they are all gathered into the broad sweep of the stream and carried down to the great catholic sea. And while I listen to the murmur of the water and watch its quiet strength the day's wrinkles are smoothed out of my face; and at last the river bears me homewards rested and at peace.

There are long stretches of time for me when I must remain apart from the world of work, often unwilling, sometimes with a very sore heart. Then I turn my steps towards my friend and wander along the banks, a solitary not alone. In the quiet evening light I watch the stream "never hasting, never resting:" the grass that grows beside it is always green, the flowers are fresh; it makes long



embracing curves—I could cross from point to point in a minute, but to follow takes five. The ways of water are ways of healing; I have a companion who makes no mistakes, touches none of my tender spots.

Presently I reach the silent pool, where the stream takes a wide sweep. Here the fair white water-lilies lie on their broad green leaves and wait for their lover the moon; for then they open their silvery leaves and bloom in the soft light fairer far than beneath the hot rays of the sun. Then, too, the buds rise out of the water and the moon kisses them into bloom and fragrance. Near by are the little yellow water-lilies, set for beauty against a background of great blue-eyed forget-me-nots and tall feathery meadowsweet. The river still sweeps on its way, but the pool is undisturbed; it lies out of the current. They say it is very deep—no one knows quite how deep—and it has its hidden tragedy. I gaze down through the clear water, following the thick lily-stalks where solemn carps sail in and out, and perch chase each other through the maze—and beyond them I cannot see the bottom, the secret of its stillness; but I may watch the clouds mirrored on its surface, and the evening glow lying at my feet.

I think of the fathomless depths of the peace of God, fair with flowers of hope; of still places wrought in man; of mirrors that reflect, in light uncomprehended, the Image of the Holy Face.

I go home across the common, comforted, towards the little town where the red roofs lie glimmering in the evening shadows, and the old grey church stands out clear and distinct against the fading sky.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*                      \*

One of the happiest memories of my childhood is the little brook in the home field. I know it was not a very clean little brook, it passed through an industrious manufacturing world—but to me then this mattered not at all.

Where it had its source I never found out; it came

from a little cave in the side of the hill, and I remember that one of its banks was always higher than the other. I once sought to penetrate the cave, but with sad results in the shape of bed before dinner and no pudding, such small sympathy have one's elders with the spirit of research. Just beyond the cave the brook was quite a respectable width—even my big boy cousin fell into mud and disgrace when he tried to jump it—and there was a gravelly beach, at least several inches square, where we launched our boats of hollowed elder-wood. Soon, however, it narrowed, it could even be stepped over; but it was still exciting and delightful, with two perilous rapids over which the boats had to be guided, and many boulders—for the brook was a brave stream, and had fashioned its bed in rocky soil. Farther down was our bridge, one flat stone dragged thither by really herculean efforts. It was unnecessary, but a triumph. A little below this outcome of our engineering skill the brook widened again before disappearing under a flagged tunnel into the neighbouring field. Here, in the shallows, we built an aquarium. It was not altogether successful, because whenever it rained at all hard, the beasts were washed out; but there was always joy in restocking it. Under one of the banks close by lived a fat frog for whom I felt great respect. We used to sit and gaze at each other in silent intercourse, until he became bored—I think I never did—and flopped into the water with a splash.

But it was the brook itself that was my chief and dearest companion. It chattered and sang to me, and told me of the goblins who lived under the hill, of fairies dancing on the grass on moonlight nights, and scolding the pale lilac milkmaids on the rich banks; and of a sad little old man dressed in brown, always sad because his dear water-children ran away from him when they heard the voice of the great river telling them of the calling of the sea.

It spoke to me of other more wonderful things, not even now to be put into words, things of the mysteries of a child's imagination; and these linger still in my life, and will linger, I think, until they are fulfilled.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have another friend—a Devonshire stream. I found it in spring when the fields along its banks were golden with Lent-lilies. I do not even know its name; it has its source up among the old grey tors, and doubtless in its beginning had a hard fight for existence. When it reaches the plain it is a good-sized stream, although nowhere navigable. I do not think it even turns a mill; it just flows along and waters the flowers. I have seen it with my bodily eyes only once; but it has left in my life a blessing, a picture of blue sky, yellow bells, and clear rippling water—and whispered secrets not forgotten.

All the Devonshire streams are full of life and strength. They chatter cheerily over stones, they toil bravely to shape out their bed. Some of them might tell horrible tales of the far-away past, of the worship of the false God when blood stained the clear waters; tales, too, of feud and warfare, of grave council and martial gathering; and happy stories, of fairy and pixy our eyes are too dull to see, and of queer little hillmen with foreign ways and terror of all human beings. Their banks are bright with tormentil, blue with forget-me-not, rich in treasures of starry moss; the water is clear, cool in the hottest summer—they rise under the shadow of the everlasting hills, and their goal is the sea.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are other times when I must leave the clean waters and the good brown earth, to live, for a while, in London: and there I go on pilgrimage that I may listen to the river's voice.

I stand sometimes at a wharf where the ships are being unloaded of the riches of every country, of fruits

of labour by my unknown brothers in strange lands; and the river speaks of citizenship in the great world of God, wherein all men have place, each man has his own place, and everyone should be neighbour to him who may have need.

I pass on to London Bridge, our Bridge of Sighs. How many of these my brethren have sought refuge in the cold grey arms of the river from something worse than death? What drove them to this dreadful resting-place? What spectre hurried them to the leap? These things, too, are my concern, the river says.

Life is very grim in London: it is not painted in the fair, glowing colours of grass and sky and trees, and shining streams that bring peace. It is drawn in hard black and white; but the voice of its dark waters must be heard all the same.

\* \* \* \*

I would not leave my rivers in the shadow. After all, this life is only a prelude, a beginning: we pass on to where "the rivers and streams make glad the city of God." But if we will not listen here, how shall we understand hereafter?

MICHAEL FAIRLESS. (1869—1901)

### XXX

#### THE GLOW-WORM

Few insects in our climes vie in popular fame with the glow-worm, that curious little animal which, to celebrate the little joys of life, kindles a beacon at its tail-end. Who does not know it, at least by name? Who has not seen it roam amid the grass, like a spark fallen from the moon at its full? The Greeks of old called it by a word meaning the bright-tailed. Science employs the same term: it calls it the lantern-bearer, *Lampyrus noctiluca*. In this case the common name is inferior to the scientific phrase, which, when translated, becomes both expressive and accurate.

In fact, we might easily cavil at the word "worm." The *Lampyrus* is not a worm at all, not even in general appearance. He has six short legs, which he well knows how to use; he is a gad-about, a trot-about. In the adult state the male is correctly garbed in wing-cases, like the true Beetle that he is. The female is an ill-favoured thing who knows naught of the delights of flying: all her life long she retains the larval shape, which, for the rest, is similar to that of the male, who himself is imperfect so long as he has not achieved the maturity that comes with pairing-time. Even in this initial stage the word "worm" is out of place. We French have the expression "Naked as a worm" to point to the lack of any defensive covering. Now the *Lampyrus* is clothed, that is to say, he wears an epidermis of some consistency; moreover, he is rather richly coloured: his body is dark brown all over, set off with pale pink on the thorax, especially on the lower sur-

face. Finally, each segment is decked at the hinder edge with two spots of a fairly bright red. A costume like this was never worn by a worm.

Let us leave this ill-chosen denomination and ask ourselves what the Lampyris feeds upon. That master in the art of gastronomy, Brillat-Savarin, said: "Show me what you eat and I will tell you what you are."

A similar question should be addressed, by way of a preliminary, to every insect whose habits we propose to study, for, from the least to the greatest in the zoological progression, the stomach sways the world; the data supplied by food are the chief of all the documents of life. Well, in spite of his innocent appearance, the Lampyris is an eater of flesh, a hunter of game; and he follows his calling with rare villainy. His regular prey is the Snail.

This detail has long been known to entomologists. What is not so well known, what is not known at all yet, to judge by what I have read, is the curious method of attack, of which I have seen no other instance anywhere.

Before he begins to feast, the Glow-worm administers an anaesthetic: he chloroforms his victim, rivalling in the process the wonders of our modern surgery, which renders the patient insensible before operating on him. The usual game is a small Snail hardly the size of a cherry, such as, for instance, *Helix variabilis*, who, in the hot weather, collects in clusters on the stiff stubble and other long, dry stalks by the road-side and there remains motionless, in profound meditation, throughout the scorching summer days. It is in some such resting-place as this that I have often been privileged to light upon the Lampyris banquetting on the prey which he had just paralysed on its shaky support by his surgical artifices.

But he is familiar with other preserves. He frequents the edges of the irrigating ditches, with their cool soil, their varied vegetation, a favourite haunt of the Mollusc. Here, he treats the game on the ground; and,

under these conditions, it is easy for me to rear him at home and to follow the operator's performance down to the smallest detail.

I will try to make the reader a witness of the strange sight. I place a little grass in a wide glass jar. In this I instal a few Glow-worms and a provision of Snails of a suitable size, neither too large nor too small, chiefly, *Helix variabilis*. We must be patient and wait. Above all we must keep an assiduous watch, for the desired events come unexpectedly and do not last long.

Here we are at last. The Glow-worm for a moment investigates the prey, which, according to its habits, is wholly withdrawn in the shell, except the edge of the mantle, which projects slightly. Then the hunter's weapon is drawn, a very simple weapon, but one that cannot be plainly perceived without the aid of a lens. It consists of two mandibles bent back powerfully into a hook, very sharp and as thin as a hair. The microscope reveals the presence of a slender groove running throughout the length. And that is all.

The insect repeatedly taps the Snail's mantle with its instrument. It all happens with such gentleness as to suggest kisses rather than bites. As children, teasing one another, we used to talk of "tweaksies" to express a slight squeeze of the finger-tips, something more like a tickling than a serious pinch. Let us use that word. In conversing with animals, language loses nothing by remaining juvenile. It is the right way for the simple to understand one another.

The Lampyris doles out his tweaks. He distributes them methodically, without hurrying, and takes a brief rest after each of them, as though he wished to ascertain the effect produced. Their number is not great: half a dozen, at most, to subdue the prey and deprive it of all power of movement. That other pinches are administered later; at the time of eating, seems very likely, but I cannot

say anything for certain, because the sequel escapes me. The first few, however—there are never many—are enough to impart inertia and loss of all feeling to the Mollusc, thanks to the prompt, I might almost say lightning, methods of Lampyris, who beyond a doubt, instils some poison or other by means of his grooved hooks.

Here is the proof of the sudden efficiency of those twitches, so mild in appearance: I take the Snail from the Lampyris, who has operated on the edge of the mantle some four or five times. I prick him with a fine needle in the fore-part, which the animal, shrunk into its shell, still leaves exposed. There is no quiver of the wounded tissues, no reaction against the brutality of the needle. A corpse itself could not give fewer signs of life.

Here is something even more conclusive: chance occasionally gives me Snails attacked by the Lampyris while they are creeping along, the foot slowly crawling, the tentacles swollen to their full extent. A few disordered movements betray a brief excitement on the part of the Mollusc and then everything ceases: the foot no longer slugs; the front part loses its graceful swan-neck curve; the tentacles become limp and give way under their own weight, dangling feebly like a broken stick. This condition persists.

Is the Snail really dead? Not at all, for I can resuscitate the seeming corpse at will. After two or three days of that singular condition which is no longer life and yet not death, I isolate the patient and, though this is not really essential to success, I give him a douche which will represent the shower so dear to the able-bodied Mollusc. In about a couple of days, my prisoner, but lately injured by the Glow-worm's treachery, is restored to his normal state. He revives, in a manner; he recovers movement and sensibility. He is affected by the stimulus of a needle; he shifts his place, crawls, puts out his tentacles, as though nothing unusual had occurred. The general torpor, a sort



of deep drunkenness, has vanished outright. The dead returns to life. What name shall we give to that form of existence which, for a time, abolishes the power of movement and the sense of pain? I can see but one that is approximately suitable: anaesthesia. The exploits of a host of Wasps whose flesh-eating grubs are provided with meat that is motionless though not dead have taught us the skilful art of the paralysing insect, which numbs the locomotory nerve-centres with its venom. We have now a humble little animal that first produces complete anaesthesia in its patient. Human science did not in reality invent this art, which is one of the wonders of latter-day surgery. Much earlier, far back in the centuries, the Lampyris, and, apparently others, knew it as well. The animal's knowledge had a long start of ours; the method alone has changed. Our operators proceed by making us inhale the fumes of ether or chloroform; the insect proceeds by injecting a special virus that comes from the mandibular fangs in infinitesimal doses. Might we not one day be able to benefit from this hint? What glorious discoveries the future would have in store for us, if we understood the beastie's secrets better!

J. H. FABRE. (1823—1915)

## XXXI

### AN ORPHANED BLACKBIRD

The bad weather brought to our little plot of ground a young blackbird, who had evidently been thrown upon the world too early in life. A good number of blackbird broods had been brought off in the bushes about us, and in the rough and tumble of those tempestuous days some of the young had no doubt got scattered and lost; this at all events was one that had called and called to be fed and warmed and comforted in vain—we had heard him calling for days—and who had now grown prematurely silent, and had soberly set himself to find his own living as best he could. Between the lawn and the small sweetbriar hedge there was a strip of loose mould where roses had been planted, and here the bird had discovered that by turning over the dead leaves and loose earth a few small morsels were to be found. During those cold, windy, wet days we observed him there diligently searching in his poor, slow little way. He would strike his beak into the loose ground, making a little hop forward at the same time to give force to the stroke, and throw up about as much earth as would cover a shilling-piece; then he would gaze attentively at the spot, and after a couple of seconds hop and strike again; and, finally, if he could see nothing to eat, he would move on a few inches and begin again in another place. That was all his art—his one poor little way of getting a living; and it was plain to see from his bedraggled appearance and feeble motions, that he was going the way of most young orphaned birds.

Now, I hate playing at providence among the

creatures, but we cannot be rid of pity; and there are exceptional cases in which one feels justified in putting out a helping hand. Nature herself is not always careless of the individual life: or perhaps it would be better to say with Thoreau, "We are not wholly involved in Nature." And anxious to give the poor bird a chance by putting him in a sheltered place, and feeding him up, as Ruskin once did in a like case, I set about catching him, but could not lay hands on him, for he was still able to fly a little, and always managed to escape pursuit among the brambles or else in the sedges by the waterside. Half an hour after being hunted, he would be back on the hedge of the lawn prodding the ground in the old feeble, futile way. And the scraps of food I cunningly placed for him he disregarded, not knowing in his ignorance what was good for him. Then I got a supply of small earthworms, and, stalking him, tossed them so as to cause them to fall near him, and he saw and knew what they were, and swallowed them hungrily; and he saw, too, that they were thrown to him by a hand, and that the hand was part of that same huge grey-clad monster that had a little while back so furiously hunted him, and at once he seemed to understand the meaning of it all, and instead of flying from, he ran to meet, us, and recovering his voice, called to be fed. The experience of one day made him a tame bird; on the second day he knew that bread and milk, stewed plums, pie-crust, and, in fact, anything we had to give, was good for him; and in the course of the next two or three days he acquired a useful knowledge of our habits. Thus, at half-past three in the morning he would begin calling to be fed at the bedroom window. If no notice was taken of him he would go away to try and find something for himself, and return at five o'clock when breakfast was in preparation, and place himself before the kitchen door. Usually he got a small snack then; and at the breakfast hour (six o'clock) he would turn up at the dining-room window.

and get a substantial meal. Dinner and teatime—twelve and half-past three o'clock—found him at the same spot; but he was often hungry between meals, and he would then sit before one door or window and call, then move to the next door, and so on until he had been all round the cottage. It was most amusing to see him when, on our return from a long walk or a day out, he would come to meet us, screaming excitedly, bounding over the lawn with long hops, looking like a miniature very dark-coloured kangaroo.

One day I came back alone to the cottage, and sat down on the lawn in a canvas chair, to wait for my companion who had the key. The blackbird had seen, and came flying to me, and pitching close to my feet, began crying to be fed, shaking his wings, and dancing about in a most excited state, for he had been left a good many hours without food, and was very hungry. As I moved not in my chair he presently ran round and began screaming and fluttering on the other side of it, thinking, I suppose, that he had gone to the wrong place, and that by addressing himself to the back of my head he would quickly get an answer.

The action of this bird in coming to be fed naturally attracted a good deal of attention among the feathered people about us; they would look on at a distance, evidently astonished and much puzzled at our bird's boldness in coming to our feet. But nothing dreadful happened to him, and little by little they began to lose their suspicion; and first a robin—the robin is always first—then other blackbirds to the number of seven, then chaffinches and dunnocks, all began to grow tame and to attend regularly at meal-time to have a share in anything that was going. The most lively, active, and quarrelsome member of this company was our now glossy foundling; and it troubled us to think that in feeding him we were but staving off the evil day when he would once more have to fend for

himself. Certainly we were teaching him nothing. But our fears were idle. The seven wild blackbirds that had formed a habit of coming to share his food were all young birds, and as time went on and the hedge fruit began to ripen, we noticed that they kept more and more together. Whenever one was observed to fly straight away to some distance, in a few moments another would follow, then another, and presently it would be seen that they were all making their way to some spot in the valley, or to the woods on the other side. After several hours' absence they would all reappear on the lawn, or near it, at the same time, showing that they had been together throughout the day and had returned in company. After observing them in their comings and goings for several weeks I felt convinced that this species had in it the remains of a gregarious instinct which affects the young birds.

Our bird, as a member of this little company, must have quickly picked up from the others all that it was necessary for him to know, and at last it was plain to us from his behaviour at the cottage that he was doing very well for himself. He was often absent most of the day with the others, and on his return late in the afternoon he would pick over the good things placed for him in a leisurely way, selecting a morsel here and there, and eating more out of compliment to us, as it seemed, than because he was hungry. But up to the very last, when he had grown as hardy and strong on the wing as any of his wild companions, he kept up his acquaintance with and confidence in us; and even at night when I would go out to where most of our wild birds roosted, in the trees and bushes growing in a vast old chalk-pit close to the cottage, and called "Blackie," instantly there would be a response—a softly chuckled note, like a sleepy "Good night," thrown back to me out of the darkness.

## "THE STOLEN BACILLUS"

'This again,' said the Bacteriologist, slipping a glass slide under the microscope, 'is a preparation of the celebrated *Bacillus* of cholera—the cholera germ.'

The pale-faced man peered down the microscope. He was evidently not accustomed to that kind of thing, and held a limp white hand over his disengaged eye. 'I see very little,' he said.

'Touch this screw,' said the Bacteriologist; 'perhaps the microscope is out of focus for you. Eyes vary so much. Just the fraction of a turn this way or that.'

'Ah! now I see,' said the visitor. 'Not so very much to see after all. Little streaks and shreds of pink. And yet those little particles, those mere atomies, might multiply and devastate a city! Wonderful!'

He stood up, and releasing the glass slip from the microscope, held it in his hand towards the window. 'Scarcely visible,' he said, scrutinizing the preparation. He hesitated. 'Are these—alive? Are they dangerous now?'

'Those have been stained and killed,' said the Bacteriologist. 'I wish, for my own part, we could kill and stain every one of them in the universe.'

'I suppose,' the pale man said with a slight smile, 'that you scarcely care to have such thing about you in the living—in the active state?'

'On the contrary, we are obliged to,' said the Bacteriologist. 'Here, for instance—' He walked across the room and took up one of several sealed tubes. 'Here is the living thing. This is a cultivation of the actual living

disease bacteria.' He hesitated. 'Bottled cholera, so to speak.'

A slight gleam of satisfaction appeared momentarily in the face of the pale man. 'It's a deadly thing to have in your possession,' he said, devouring the little tube with his eyes. The Bacteriologist watched the morbid pleasure in his visitor's expression. This man, who had visited him that afternoon with a note of introduction from an old friend, interested him from the very contrast of their dispositions. The lank black hair and deep grey eyes, the haggard expression and nervous manner, the fitful yet keen interest of his visitor were a novel change from the phlegmatic deliberations of the ordinary scientific worker with whom the Bacteriologist chiefly associated. It was perhaps natural, with a hearer evidently so impressionable to the lethal nature of his topic, to take the most effective aspect of the matter.

He held the tube in his hand thoughtfully. 'Yes, here is the pestilence imprisoned. Only break such a little tube as this into a supply of drinking-water, say to these minute particles of life that one must needs stain and examine with the highest powers of the microscope even to see, and that one can neither smell nor taste—say to them, "Go forth, increase and multiply, and replenish the cisterns," and death—mysterious, untraceable death, death swift and terrible, death full of pain and indignity—would be released upon this city, and go hither and thither seeking his victims. Here he would take the husband from the wife, here the child from its mother, here the statesman from his duty, and here the toiler from his trouble. He would follow the water-mains, creeping along streets, picking out and punishing a house here and a house there where they did not boil their drinking-water, creeping into the wells of the mineral-water makers, getting washed into salad, and lying dormant in ices. He would wait ready to be drunk in the horse-troughs, and by unwary children in the

public fountains. He would soak into the soil, to reappear in springs and wells at a thousand unexpected places. Once start him at the water supply, and before we could ring him in, and catch him again, he would have decimated the metropolis.'

He stopped abruptly. He had been told rhetoric was his weakness.

'But he is quite safe here, you know—quite safe.'

The pale-faced man nodded. His eyes shone. He cleared his throat. 'These Anarchist-rascals,' said he, 'are fools, blind fools—to use bombs when this kind of thing is attainable. I think—'

A gentle rap, a mere light touch of the finger-nails, was heard at the door. The Bacteriologist opened it. 'Just a minute, dear,' whispered his wife.

When he re-entered the laboratory, his visitor was looking at his watch. 'I had no idea I had wasted an hour of your time,' he said. 'Twelve minutes to four. I ought to have left here by half-past three. But your things were really too interesting. No, positively I cannot stop a moment longer. I have an engagement at four.'

He passed out of the room reiterating his thanks, and the Bacteriologist accompanied him to the door, and then returned thoughtfully along the passage to his laboratory. He was musing on the ethnology of his visitor. Certainly the man was not a Teutonic type nor a common Latin one. 'A morbid product, anyhow, I am afraid,' said the Bacteriologist to himself. 'How he gloated on those cultivations of disease-germs!' A disturbing thought struck him. He turned to the bench by the vapour-bath, and then very quickly to his writing-table. Then he felt hastily in his pockets, and then rushed to the door. 'I may have put it down on the hall table,' he said.

'Minnie!' he shouted hoarsely in the hall.

'Yes, dear,' came a remote voice.

'Had I anything in my hand when I spoke to you,



dear, just now?’

Pause.

‘Nothing, dear, because I remember—’

‘Blue ruin!’ cried the Bacteriologist, and incontinently ran to the front door and down the steps of his house to the street.

Minnie, hearing the door slam violently, ran in alarm to the window. Down the street a slender man was getting into a cab. The Bacteriologist, hatless, and in his carpet slippers, was running and gesticulating wildly towards this group. One slipper came off, but he did not wait for it. ‘He has gone *mad*!’ said Minnie; ‘it’s that horrid science of his;’ and, opening the window, would have called after him. The slender man, suddenly glancing round, seemed struck with the same idea of mental disorder. He pointed hastily to the Bacteriologist, said something to the cabman, the apron of the cab slammed, the whip swished, the horse’s feet clattered, and in a moment cab, and Bacteriologist hotly in pursuit, had receded up the vista of the roadway and disappeared round the corner.

Minnie remained straining out of the window for a minute. Then she drew her head back into the room again. She was dumbfounded. ‘Of course he is eccentric,’ she meditated. ‘But running about London—in the height of the season, too—in his socks! A happy thought struck her. She hastily put her bonnet on, seized his shoes, went into the hall, took down his hat and light overcoat from the pegs, emerged upon the doorsteps, and hailed a cab that opportunely crawled by. ‘Drive me up the road and round Havelock Crescent, and see if we can find a gentleman running about in a velveteen coat and no hat.’

‘Velveteen coat, ma’am, and no ‘at. Very good, ma’am.’ And the cabman whipped up at once in the most matter-of-fact way, as if he drove to this address every day in his life.

Some few minutes later the little group of cabmen

and loafers that collect round the cabman's shelter at Haverstock Hill were startled by the passing of a cab with a ginger-coloured screw of a horse, driven furiously . . . .

Minnie went by in a perfect roar of applause. She did not like it but she felt that she was doing her duty, and whirled on down Haverstock Hill and Camden Town High Street with her eyes ever intent on the animated back view of old George, who was driving her vagrant husband so incomprehensibly away from her.

The man in the foremost cab sat crouched in the corner, his arms tightly folded and the little tube that contained such vast possibilities of destruction gripped in his hand. His mood was a singular mixture of fear and exultation. Chiefly he was afraid of being caught before he could accomplish his purpose, but behind this was a vaguer but larger fear of the awfulness of his crime. But his exultation far exceeded his fear. No Anarchist before him had ever approached this conception of his. Ravachol Vaillant, all those distinguished persons whose fame he had envied, dwindled into insignificance beside him. He had only to make sure of the water supply, and break the little tube into a reservoir. How brilliantly he had planned it, forged the letter of introduction and got into the laboratory, and how brilliantly he had seized his opportunity! The world should hear of him at last. All those people who had sneered at him, neglected him, preferred other people to him, found his company undesirable, should consider him at last. Death, death, death! They had always treated him as a man of no importance. All the world had been in a conspiracy to keep him under. He would teach them yet what it is to isolate a man. What was this familiar street? Great Saint Andrew's Street, of course! How fared the chase? He craned out of the cab. The Bacteriologist was scarcely fifty yards behind. That was bad. He would be caught and stopped yet. He felt in his pocket for money, and found half a sovereign.

'This he thrust up through the trap in the top of the cab into the man's face. 'More,' he shouted, 'if only we get away.'

The money was snatched out of his hand. 'Right you are,' said the cabman, and the trap slammed, and the lash lay along the glistening side of the horse. The cab swayed, and the Anarchist, half-standing under the trap put the hand containing the little glass tube upon the apron to preserve his balance. He felt the brittle thing crack, and the broken half of it rang upon the floor of the cab. He fell back into the seat with a curse, and stared dismally at the two or three drops of moisture on the apron.

He shuddered.

'Well! I suppose I shall be the first. *Phew!* Anyhow, I shall be a Martyr. That's something. But it is a filthy death, nevertheless. I wonder if it hurts as much as they say.'

Presently a thought occurred to him—he groped between his feet. A little drop was still in the broken end of the tube, and he drank that to make sure. It was better to make sure. At any rate, he would not fail.

Then it dawned upon him that there was no further need to escape the Bacteriologist. In Wellington Street he told the cabman to stop, and got out. He slipped on the step, and his head felt queer. It was rapid stuff this cholera poison. He waved his cabman out of existence, so to speak, and stood on the pavement with his arms folded upon his breast awaiting the arrival of the Bacteriologist. There was something tragic in his pose. The sense of imminent death gave him a certain dignity. He greeted his pursuer with a defiant laugh.

'*Vive l' Anarchie!* You are too late, my friend. I have drunk it. The cholera is abroad!'

The Bacteriologist from his cab beamed curiously at him through his spectacles. 'You have drunk it! An Anarchist! I see now.' He was about to say something

more, and then checked himself. A smile hung in the corner of his mouth. He opened the apron of his cab as if to descend, at which the Anarchist waved him a dramatic farewell and strode off towards Waterloo Bridge, carefully jostling his infected body against as many people as possible. The Bacteriologist was so preoccupied with the vision of him that he scarcely manifested the slightest surprise at the appearance of Minnie upon the pavement with his hat and shoes and overcoat. 'Very good of you to bring my things,' he said, and remained lost in contemplation of the receding figure of the Anarchist.

'You had better get in,' he said, still staring. Minnie felt absolutely convinced now that he was mad, and directed the cabman home on her own responsibility. 'Put on my shoes? Certainly, dear,' said he, as the cab began to turn, and hid the strutting black figure, now small in the distance, from his eyes. Then suddenly something grotesque struck him, and he laughed. Then he remarked, 'It is really very serious, though.'

'You see, that man came to my house to see me, and he is an Anarchist. No—don't faint, or I cannot possibly tell you the rest. And I wanted to astonish him, not knowing he was an Anarchist, and took up a cultivation of that new species of Bacterium I was telling you of, that infest, and I think cause, the blue patches upon various monkeys; and like a fool, I said it was Asiatic cholera. And he ran away with it to poison the water of London, and he certainly might have made things look blue for this civilized city. And now he has swallowed it. Of course, I cannot say what will happen, but you know it turned that kitten blue, and the three puppies—in patches, and the sparrow—bright blue. But the bother is, I shall have all the trouble and expense of preparing some more.

HERBERT GEORGE WELLS. (1866—)

### XXXIII

#### A DEFENCE OF PENNY DREADFULS

One of the strangest examples of the degree to which ordinary life is undervalued is the example of popular literature, the vast mass of which we contentedly describe as vulgar. The boy's novelette may be ignorant in a literary sense, which is only like saying that a modern novel is ignorant in the chemical sense, or the economic sense, or the astronomical sense; but it is not vulgar intrinsically—it is the actual centre of a million flaming imaginations.

In former centuries the educated class ignored the ruck of vulgar literature. They ignored, and therefore did not, properly speaking, despise it. Simple ignorance and indifference does not inflate the character with pride. A man does not walk down the street giving a haughty twirl to his moustaches at the thought of his superiority to some variety of deep-sea fishes. The old scholars left the whole under-world of popular compositions in a similar darkness.

To-day, however, we have reversed this principle. We do despise vulgar compositions, and we do not ignore them. We are in some danger of becoming petty in our study of pettiness; there is a terrible Circean law in the background that if the soul stoops too ostentatiously to examine anything it never gets up again. There is no class of vulgar publications about which there is, to my mind, more utterly ridiculous exaggeration and misconception than the current boys' literature of the lowest stratum. This class of composition has presumably always existed, and must exist. It has no more claim to be good literature than the daily conversation of its readers to be

fine oratory, or the lodging-houses and tenements they inhabit to be sublime architecture. But people must have conversation, they must have houses, and they must have stories. The simple need for some kind of ideal world in which fictitious persons play an unhampered part is infinitely deeper and older than the rules of good art, and much more important. Every one of us in childhood has constructed such an invisible *dramatis personae*, but it never occurred to our nurses to correct the composition by careful comparison with Balzac. In the East the professional story-teller goes from village to village with a small carpet; and I wish sincerely that any one had the moral courage to spread that carpet and sit on it in Ludgate Circus. But it is not probable that all the tales of the carpet-bearer are little gems of original artistic workmanship. Literature and fiction are two entirely different things. Literature is a luxury; fiction is a necessity. A work of art can hardly be too short, for its climax is its merit. A story can never be too long, for its conclusion is merely to be deplored, like the last halfpenny or the last pipelight. And so, while the increase of the artistic conscience tends in more ambitious works to brevity and impressionism, voluminous industry still marks the producer of the true romantic trash. There was no end to the ballads of Robin Hood; there is no end to the volumes about Dick Deadshot and the Avenging Nine. These two heroes are deliberately conceived as immortal.

But instead of basing all discussion of the problem upon the common-sense recognition of this fact—that the youth of the lower orders always has had and always must have formless and endless romantic reading of some kind, and then going on to make provision for its wholesomeness—we begin, generally speaking, by fantastic abuse of this reading as a whole and indignant surprise that the errand-boys under discussion do not read *The Egoist* and *The Master Builder*. It is the custom, particularly among

magistrates, to attribute half the crimes of the Metropolis to cheap novelettes. If some grimy urchin runs away with an apple, the magistrate shrewdly points out that the child's knowledge that apples appease hunger is traceable to some curious literary researches. The boys themselves, when penitent, frequently accuse the novelettes with great bitterness, which is only to be expected from young people possessed of no little native humour. If I had forged a will, and could obtain sympathy by tracing the incident to the influence of Mr. George Moore's novels, I should find the greatest entertainment in the diversion. At any rate, it is firmly fixed in the minds of most people that gutter-boys, unlike everybody else in the community, find their principal motives for conduct in printed books.

Now it is quite clear that this objection, the objection brought by magistrates, has nothing to do with literary merit. Bad story writing is not a crime. Mr. Hall Caine walks the streets openly, and cannot be put in prison for an anticlimax. The objection rests upon the theory that the tone of the mass of boys' novelettes is criminal and degraded, appealing to low cupidity and low cruelty. This is the magisterial theory, and this is rubbish.

So far as I have seen them, in connection with the dirtiest bookstalls in the poorest districts, the facts are simply these: The whole bewildering mass of vulgar juvenile literature is concerned with adventures, rambling, disconnected and endless. It does not express any passion of any sort, for there is no human character of any sort. It runs eternally in certain grooves of local and historical type: the mediaeval knight, the eighteenth century duellist, and the modern cowboy recur with the same stiff simplicity as the conventional human figures in an Oriental pattern. I can quite as easily imagine a human being kindling wild appetites by the contemplation of his Turkey carpet as by such dehumanized and naked narrative as this.

Among these stories there are a certain number which

deal sympathetically with the adventures of robbers, outlaws, and pirates, which present in a dignified and romantic light thieves and murderers like Dick Turpin and Claude Duval. That is to say, they do precisely the same thing as Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Scott's *Rob Roy*, Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, Byron's *Corsair*, Wordsworth's *Rob Roy's Grave*, Stevenson's *Macaire*, Mr. Max Pemberton's *Iron Pirate*, and a thousand more works distributed systematically as prizes and Christmas presents. Nobody imagines that an admiration of Locksley in *Ivanhoe* will lead a boy to shoot Japanese arrows at the deer in Richmond Park; no one thinks that the incautious opening of Wordsworth at the poem on Rob Roy will set him up for life as a blackmailer. In the case of our own class, we recognize that this wild life is contemplated with pleasure by the young, not because it is like their own life, but because it is different from it. It might at least cross our minds that, for whatever other reason the errand-boy reads *The Red Revenge*, it really is not because he is dripping with the gore of his own friends and relatives.

In this matter, as in all such matters, we lose our bearings entirely by speaking of the "lower classes" when we mean humanity minus ourselves. This trivial romantic literature is not especially plebeian: it is simply human. The philanthropist can never forget classes and callings. He says, with a modest swagger, "I have invited twenty-five factory hands to tea." If he said, "I have invited twenty-five chartered accountants to tea," every one would see the humour of so simple a classification. But this is what we have done with this lumberland of foolish writing: we have probed, as if it were some monstrous new disease, what is, in fact, nothing but the foolish and valiant heart of man. Ordinary men will always be sentimentalists: for a sentimentalist is simply a man who has feelings and does not trouble to invent a new way of expressing them. These common and current publications have nothing



essentially evil about them. They express the sanguine and heroic truisms on which civilization is built; for it is clear that unless civilization is built on truisms, it is not built at all. Clearly, there could be no safety for a society in which the remark by the Chief Justice that murder was wrong was regarded as an original and dazzling epigram.

If the authors and publishers of *Dick Deadshot*, and such remarkable works, were suddenly to make a raid upon the educated class, were to take down the names of every man, however distinguished, who was caught at a University Extension Lecture, were to confiscate all our novels and warn us all to correct our lives, we should be seriously annoyed. Yet they have far more right to do so than we; for they, with all their idiotcy, are normal and we are abnormal. It is the modern literature of the educated, not of the uneducated, which is avowedly and aggressively criminal. Books recommending profligacy and pessimism, at which the high-souled errand-boy would shudder, lie upon all our drawing-room tables. If the dirtiest old owner of the dirtiest old bookstall in White-chapel dared to display works really recommending polygamy or suicide, his stock would be seized by the police. These things are our luxuries. And with a hypocrisy so ludicrous as to be almost unparalleled in history, we rate the gutter-boys for their immorality at the very time that we are discussing (with equivocal German professors) whether morality is valid at all. At the very instant that we curse the Penny Dreadful for encouraging thefts upon property, we canvass the proposition that all property is theft. At the very instant we accuse it (quite unjustly) of lubricity and indecency, we are cheerfully reading philosophies which glory in lubricity and indecency. At the very instant that we charge it with encouraging the young to destroy life, we are placidly discussing whether life is worth preserving.

But it is we who are the morbid exceptions; it is we

who are the criminal class. This should be our great comfort. The vast mass of humanity, with their vast mass of idle books and idle words, have never doubted and never will doubt that courage is splendid, that fidelity is noble, that distressed ladies should be rescued, and vanquished enemies spared. There are a large number of cultivated persons who doubt these maxims of daily life, just as there are a large number of persons who believe they are the Prince of Wales; and I am told that both classes of people are entertaining conversationalists. But the average man or boy writes daily in these great gaudy diaries of his soul, which we call Penny Dreadfuls, a plainer and better gospel than any of those iridescent ethical paradoxes that the fashionable change as often as their bonnets. It may be a very limited aim in morality to shoot a "many-faced and fickle traitor," but at least it is a better aim than to be a many-faced and fickle traitor, which is a simple summary of a good many modern systems from Mr. d'Annunzio's downwards. So long as the coarse and thin texture of mere current popular romance is not touched by a paltry culture, it will never be vitally immoral. It is always on the side of life. The poor—the slaves who really stoop under the burden of life—have often been mad, scatter-brained, and cruel, but never hopeless. That is a class privilege, like cigars. Their drivelling literature will always be a "blood and thunder" literature, as simple as the thunder of heaven and the blood of men.

G. K. CHESTERTON. (1874—1936)

## XXXIV

### ON THE RULE OF THE ROAD

That was a jolly story which Mr. Arthur Ransome told the other day in one of his messages from Petrograd. A stout old lady was walking with her basket down the middle of a street in Petrograd to the great confusion of the traffic and with no small peril to herself. It was pointed out to her that the pavement was the place for foot-passengers, but she replied: 'I'm going to walk where I like. We've got liberty now.' It did not occur to the dear old lady that if liberty entitled the foot-passenger to walk down the middle of the road, it also entitled the cab-driver to drive on the pavement, and that the end of such liberty would be universal chaos. Everybody would be getting in everybody else's way and nobody would get anywhere. Individual liberty would have become social anarchy.

There is a danger of the world getting liberty-drunk in these days like the old lady with the basket, and it is just as well to remind ourselves of what the rule of the road means. It means that in order that the liberties of all may be preserved, the liberties of everybody must be curtailed. When the policeman, say, at Piccadilly Circus steps into the middle of the road and puts out his hand, he is the symbol not of tyranny, but of liberty. You may not think so. You may, being in a hurry and seeing your motor-car pulled up by this insolence of office, feel that your liberty has been outraged. How dare this fellow interfere with your free use of the public highway? Then, if you are a reasonable person, you will reflect that

if he did not, incidentally, interfere with you he would interfere with no one, and the result would be that Piccadilly Circus would be a maelstrom that you would never cross at all. You have submitted to a curtailment of private liberty in order that you may enjoy a social order which makes your liberty a reality.

(Liberty is not a personal affair only, but a social contract.) It is an accommodation of interest. In matters which do not touch anybody else's liberty, of course, I may be as free as I like. If I choose to go down the Strand in a dressing-gown, with long hair and bare feet, who shall say me nay? You have liberty to laugh at me, but I have liberty to be indifferent to you. And if I have a fancy for dyeing my hair, or waxing my moustache (which heaven forbid), or wearing a tall hat, a frock-coat and sandals, or going to bed late or getting up early, I shall follow my fancy and ask no man's permission. I shall not inquire of you whether I may eat mustard with my mutton. I may like mustard with my mutton. And you will not ask me whether you may be a Protestant or a Catholic, whether you may marry the dark lady or the fair lady, whether you may prefer Ella Wheeler Wilcox to Wordsworth, or champagne to shandygaff.

In all these and a thousand other details you and I please ourselves and ask no one's leave. We have a whole kingdom in which we rule alone, can do what we choose, be wise or ridiculous, harsh or easy, conventional or odd. But directly we step out of that kingdom, our personal liberty of action becomes qualified by other people's liberty. I might like to practise on the trombone from midnight till three in the morning. If I went on to the top of Helvellyn to do it I could please myself, but if I do it out in the streets, the neighbours will remind me that my liberty to blow the trombone must not interfere with their liberty to sleep in quiet. There are a lot of people

in the world, and I have to accommodate my liberty to their liberties.

We are all liable to forget this and, unfortunately, we are much more conscious of the imperfections of others in this respect than of our own.

I got into a railway carriage at a country station the other morning and settled down for what the schoolboys would call an hour's 'swot' at a Blue-book. I was not reading it for pleasure. The truth is that I never do read Blue-books for pleasure. I read them as a barrister reads a brief, for the very humble purpose of turning an honest penny out of them. Now, if you are reading a book for pleasure it doesn't matter what is going on around you. I think I could enjoy *Tristram Shandy* or *Treasure Island* in the midst of an earthquake.

But when you are reading a thing as a task you need reasonable quiet, and that is what I didn't get, for at the next station in came a couple of men, one of whom talked to his friend for the rest of his journey in a loud and pompous voice. He was one of those people who remind one of that story of Horn Tooke, who, meeting a person of immense swagger in the street, stopped him and said, 'Excuse me, sir, but are you someone in particular?' This gentleman was someone in particular. As I wrestled with clauses and sections, his voice rose like a gale, and his family history, the deeds of his sons in the war, and his criticisms of the generals and the politicians submerged my poor attempts to hang on to my job. I shut up the Blue-book, looked out of the window, and listened wearily while the voice thundered on with themes like these: 'Now what French ought to have done . . . . . ' 'The mistake the Germans made . . . . . ' 'If only Asquith had . . . . . ' You know the sort of stuff. I had heard it all before, oh, so often. It was like a barrel-organ, groaning out some banal song of long ago.

If I had asked him to be good enough to talk in a

lower tone I daresay he would have thought I was a very rude fellow. It did not occur to him that anybody could have anything better to do than to listen to him, and I have no doubt he left the carriage convinced that everybody in it had, thanks to him, had a very illuminating journey, and would carry away a pleasing impression of his encyclopaedic range. He was obviously a well-intentioned person. The thing that was wrong with him was that he had not the social sense. He was not 'a clubbable man.'

A reasonable consideration for the rights or feelings of others is the foundation of social conduct. It is commonly alleged against women that in this respect they are less civilized than men, and I am bound to confess that in my experience it is the woman—the well-dressed woman—who thrusts herself in front of you at the ticket office. The man would not attempt it, partly because he knows the thing would not be tolerated from him, but also because he has been better drilled in the small give-and-take of social relationships. He has lived more in the broad current of the world, where you have to learn to accommodate yourself to the general standard of conduct, and his school life, his club life, and his games have in this respect given him a training that women are only now beginning to enjoy.

(I believe that the rights of small people and quiet people are as important to preserve as the rights of small nationalities.) When I hear the aggressive, bullying horn which some motorists deliberately use, I confess that I feel something boiling up in me which is very like what I felt when Germany came trampling like a bully over Belgium. By what right, my dear sir, do you go along our highways uttering that hideous curse on all who impede your path? Cannot you announce your coming like a gentleman? Cannot you take your turn? Are you someone in particular or are you simply a hot gosseller of the prophet Nietzsche? I find myself wondering what sort of

person it is who can sit behind that hoglike outrage without realising that he is the spirit of Prussia incarnate, and a very ugly spectacle in a civilized world.

And there is the more harmless person who has bought a very blatant gramophone, and on Sunday afternoon sets the thing going, opens the windows and fills the street with *Keep the home fires burning* or some similar banality. What are the right limits of social behaviour in a matter of this sort? Let us take the trombone as an illustration again. Hazlitt said that a man who wanted to learn that fearsome instrument was entitled to learn it in his own house, even though he was a nuisance to his neighbours, but it was his business to make the nuisance as slight as possible. He must practise in the attic, and shut the window. He had no right to sit in his front room, open the window, and blow his noise into his neighbours' ears with the maximum of violence. And so with the gramophone. If you like the gramophone you are entitled to have it, but you are interfering with the liberties of your neighbours if you don't do what you can to limit the noise to your own household. Your neighbours may not like *Keep the home fires burning*. They may prefer to have their Sunday afternoon undisturbed, and it is as great an impertinence for you wilfully to trespass on their peace as it would be to go, unasked, into their gardens and trample on their flower beds.

There are cases, of course, where the clash of liberties seems to defy compromise. My dear old friend X, who lives in a West End square and who is an amazing mixture of good nature and irascibility, flies into a passion when he hears a street piano, and rushes out to order it away. But nearby lives a distinguished lady of romantic picaresque tastes, who dotes on street pianos, and attracts them as wasps are attracted to a jar of jam. Whose liberty in this case should surrender to the other? For the life of me I cannot say. It is as reasonable to like street pianos

as to dislike them—and *vice-versa*. I would give much to hear Sancho Panza's solution of such a nice riddle.

I suppose the fact is that we can be neither complete anarchists nor complete socialists in this complex world—or rather we must be a judicious mixture of both. We have both liberties to preserve—our individual liberty and our social liberty. We must watch the bureaucrat on the one side and warn off the anarchist on the other. I am neither a Marxist, nor a Tolstoyan, but a compromise. I shall not permit any authority to say that my child must go to this school or that, shall specialise in science or arts, shall play rugger or soccer. These things are personal. But if I proceed to say that my child shall have no education at all, that he shall be brought up as a primeval savage, or at Mr. Fagin's academy for pickpockets, then society will politely but firmly tell me that it has no use for primeval savages and a very stern objection to pickpockets, and that my child must have a certain minimum of education whether I like it or not. I cannot have the liberty to be a nuisance to my neighbours or make my child a burden and a danger to the commonwealth.

It is in the small matters of conduct, in the observance of the rule of the road, that we pass judgment upon ourselves, and declare that we are civilized or uncivilized. The great moments of heroism and sacrifice are rare. It is the little habits of commonplace intercourse that make up the great sum of life and sweeten or make bitter the journey. I hope my friend in the railway carriage will reflect on this. Then he will not cease, I am sure, to explain to his neighbours where French went wrong and where the Germans went ditto; but he will do it in a way that will permit me to read my Blue-book undisturbed.

A. G. GARDINER. (1865—)



## XXXV

### ALL ABOUT A DOG

It was a bitterly cold night, and even at the far end of the bus the east wind that raved along the street cut like a knife. The bus stopped, and two women and a man got in together and filled the vacant places. The younger woman was dressed in sealskin, and carried one of those little Pekinese dogs that women in sealskin like to carry in their laps. The conductor came in and took the fares. Then his eye rested with cold malice on the beady-eyed toy dog. I saw trouble brewing. This was the opportunity for which he had been waiting, and he intended to make the most of it. I had marked him as the type of what Mr. Wells has called the Resentful Employee, the man with a general vague grievance against everything, and a particular grievance against passengers who came and sat in his bus while he shivered at the door.

"You must take that dog out," he said with sour venom. "I shall certainly do nothing of the kind. You can take my name and address," said the woman, who had evidently expected the challenge and knew the reply.

"You must take that dog out—that's my orders."

"I won't go on the top in such weather. It would kill me," said the woman.

"Certainly not," said her lady companion. "You've got a cough as it is."

"It's nonsense," said her male companion.

The conductor pulled the bell and the bus stopped.

"This bus doesn't go on until that dog is brought out." And he stepped on to the pavement and waited. It was

his moment of triumph. He had the law on his side and a whole busful of angry people under the harrow. His embittered soul was having a real holiday.

The storm inside rose high. "Shameful;" "Why isn't he in the army?;" "Call the police;" "Let's all report him;" "Let's make him give us our fares back;" "Yes, that's it, let's make him give us our fares back." For everybody was on the side of the lady and the dog.

That little animal sat blinking at the dim lights in happy unconsciousness of the rumpus of which he was the cause.

The conductor came to the door. "What's your number?" said one, taking out a pocket-book, with a gesture of terrible things. "There's my number," said the conductor imperturbably. "Give us our fares back—you've engaged to carry us—you can't leave us here all night." "No fares back," said the conductor.

Two or three passengers got out and disappeared into the night. The conductor took another turn on the pavement, then went and had a talk with the driver. Another bus, the last on the road, sailed by, indifferent to the shouts of the passengers to stop. "They stick by each other—the villains," was the comment.

Someone pulled the bell violently. That brought the driver round to the door. "Who's conductor of this bus?" he said, and paused for a reply. None coming, he returned to his seat and resumed beating his arms across his chest. There was no hope in that quarter. A policeman strolled up and looked in at the door. An avalanche of indignant protests and appeals burst on him. "Well, he's got his rules, you know," he said genially. "Give your name and address."

"That's what he's been offered, and he won't take it." "Oh," said the policeman, and he went away and took his stand a few yards down the street, where he was joined by two more constables.

And still the little dog blinked at the lights, and the conductor walked to and fro on the pavement, like a captain on the quarterdeck in the hour of victory. A young woman, whose voice had risen high above the gale inside, descended on him with an air of threatening and slaughter. He was immovable—as cold as the night and hard as the pavement. She passed on in a fury of impotence to the three policemen, who stood like a group of statuary up the street watching the drama. Then she came back, imperiously beckoned to her “young man” who had sat a silent witness of her rage, and vanished. Others followed. The bus was emptying. Even the dashing young fellow who had demanded the number, and who had declared he would see this thing through if he sat there all night, had taken an opportunity to slip away.

Meanwhile the Pekinese party were passing through every stage of resistance to abject surrender. “I’ll go on the top,” said the sealskin lady at last. “You mustn’t.” “I will.” “You’ll have pneumonia.” “Let me take it.” (This from the man). “Certainly not”—she would die with her dog. When she had disappeared up the stairs the conductor came back, pulled the bell, and the bus went on. He stood sourly triumphant while his conduct was savagely discussed in his face by the remnant of the party.

Then the engine struck work, and the conductor went to the help of the driver. It was a long job, and presently the lady with the dog stole down the stairs and re-entered the bus. When the engine was put right, the conductor came back and pulled the bell. Then his eye fell on the dog, and his hand went to the bell-rope again. The driver looked round, the conductor pointed to the dog, the bus stopped, and the struggle recommenced with all the original features, the conductor walking the pavement, the driver smacking his arms on the box, the little dog blinking at the lights, the sealskin lady declaring that she would *not* go on the top—and finally going.

"I've got my rules," said the conductor to me when I was the last passenger behind. He had won his victory, but felt that he would like to justify himself to somebody.

"Rules," I said, "are necessary things, but there are rules and rules. Some are hard and fast rules, like the rule of the road, which cannot be broken without danger to life and limb. But some are only rules for your guidance, which you can apply or wink at, as common sense dictates—like that rule about the dogs. They are not a whip put in your hand to scourge your passengers with, but an authority for an emergency. They are meant to be observed in the spirit, not in the letter—for the comfort and not the discomfort of the passengers. You have kept the rule and broken its spirit. You want to mix your rules with a little goodwill and good temper."

He took it very well, and when I got off the bus he said "Good night," quite amiably.

A. G. GARDINER.

LS

## XXXVI

### NOISES

Yet once more we are in the thick of a campaign against noises. Dr. Horton has been attacking the motorists who disturb his Sunday services by making the various noises within the gamut of motor-cars and motor-bicycles as they hurry past, and Sir Walter de Frece has been calling for the cessation of the inferno, due to similar causes, on the Brighton front. The sense of hearing must surely be the most intolerant of all the senses, for among the letters of complaint that are a perpetually interesting feature of the newspapers, there must be at least three protesting against outrages on the ear for one that protests against outrages on the eye. Men are apparently more infuriated by what they hear than by what they see. Only a very sensitive man is kept awake at night by the unsightliness of modern life, but thousands lie awake cursing the noisiness of modern life. And there seems to be no cure for this noisiness. Banish one noise, and you only make room for another. Almost the only thing that the inventors cannot invent is silence. They have, if we may trust the writers of detective stories, invented silencers for revolvers; they have invented silencers for motor-cars. But they have never been able to invent a silencer for streets. They give us wooden pavements and asphalt to muffle the noise of wheels, and, even before the days of motor-cars, they gave us pneumatic tyres that made hansom-cabs so silent that, for the safety of the public, the horses had to make a new kind of noise with bells on their harness. But, with all their inventions for the com-

fort of civilized men and women, they have left us a world that is fuller of unpleasant noises than it has ever been in history.

And the rest of us are as helpless as the inventors. We have put down noise after noise only to find that the noise that remains is greater than ever. You would have imagined that London would become a great deal quieter as a result of the order forbidding whistling for taxi-cabs, but we look back on London of the whistles as a quieter place than the London of to-day. Similarly you would have thought that the prohibition of barrel-organs in many districts would have lessened the general din, but what are a few barrel-organs amid the uproar of London? We are told that in the old days the dustmen carried huge bells which they rang almost incessantly, and that, before pillar-boxes were set up, postmen stood at the street-corners and rang bells so loudly that people might bring out their letters to them. We have suppressed these nuisances, but we have suppressed them in vain. Certain suburban districts may be quieter than they used to be, though even that is doubtful; but I am sure the busier parts of the towns are noisier. And it is not merely that the noises have grown louder: they have also grown more nerve-wracking and hideous.

Certainly, I look back without detestation to the noises of thirty or forty years ago. The noises made both by nature and by the inventions of man were all but equally agreeable to the imagination. As for the noises of nature, there have been people who disliked the noise of the sea, and who could not even sleep in its neighbourhood; but to me there was nothing more lulling and delightful than the continuous bursting of waves on a long shore. I am not sure whether we should like the noise of waves so much if it were made, not by waves, but by a machine. So much of our pleasure is due to association that it is quite possible that, if the sea made a noise like a motor-horn, and if

motor-horns made a noise like a breaking wave, we should praise the sea for making a noise that we should think intolerable in the motor-horn. It may have been because of the pleasures of association that, whenever I spent a month in a house overlooking a harbour, I was ravished not only by every sound made by the sea itself but by every sound made in the harbour. I loved the rattle of pulleys as the ships were being unloaded, the puffing of engines and the rumble of railway trucks, on the line that connected the harbour with the station, the flapping of sails and the squeaking of cordage in the wind, the screaming of gulls, the lapping of water among the rocks and under the boats, the yelling of railwaymen, I liked all the noises of the place both collectively and individually, and no sight or sound or smell could, except by a miracle, have given me anything but pleasure in such surroundings. The very squeaking and clanging of the little iron gate through which people passed in order to cross the railway-line charmed the ear. There must have been a continuous succession of noises in the place, but they were noises that produced an impression of all-pervading peace.

It is the same, I imagine, with most country noises. They melt and merge into the general peace of nature. Our imaginations tolerate them because we associate them with the peace of fields under the sun and the stars. We hear them not merely with our ears but with our minds. The hooting of the owls does not disturb us, because they too are inhabitants of the universal peace of the countryside. Yet, if exactly the same noise as the owls make were made by motor-horns, we should vibrate with hostility as it punctuated the night hours, and should write to the papers protesting that the din made it impossible to sleep. Remove the noises made by birds from the country to the town, and you will be surprised to find how, as soon as they have lost their associations with rural peace, they begin to be resented as disturbers of urban peace. About twenty

years ago a coachman living near Portland Place was summoned for keeping a thrush that was a serious nuisance to his neighbours because of its continual singing. A Harley Street surgeon, giving evidence in court, declared that the thrush's singing interfered with his work, and that he had had to change his consulting-room because of it. It had, he declared, "a singularly rasping, raucous tone. He had never heard a thrush like it before." The proprietress of a nursing home also gave evidence that the thrush made "a shrill, screeching noise." I doubt, however, if the most melodious thrush in the world, singing from a cage in a London Street, would have seemed melodious to these witnesses. Several witnesses on the other side, indeed, warmly defended the thrush's musical character. A boot-maker declared that it "sang in a joyful and exhilarating way." A veterinary surgeon testified that "it sang beautifully and was a source of great pleasure to himself and family." And the coachman's mistress spoke of it as a bird to which she could listen all day. Obviously, these conflicting witnesses heard the bird not with different kinds of ears but with different imaginations. The one group heard in the thrush's song only one more addition to the noises of the town. To the other group the town became the country as they listened to the bird, as *Chap-side* was transformed by a thrush's song in Wordsworth's poem. I myself, I think, should have been with those who regarded the thrush as a nuisance. Apart altogether from the objection to the caging of wild birds, one cannot help realizing that one can have too much even of the song of a thrush, and that a cage, by keeping it perpetually in the same place, prevents that coming and going which in nature brings constant variety in the day. In a country garden, every day in June is a day of surprise, with some change in the song or in the order and multitude of the songs. Our enjoyment of the song of the bird is the greater because it is beyond our control, and may cease



just as we are longing for it to go on for ever. The song of a caged bird, however, goes on so long that we become critical and exasperated. I am sure the canary would give infinitely more pleasure with its song if it were a fleeting and uncontrolled visitor to the bushes in the garden, and nearly always flew away before we had time to get tired of it. A caged canary seems to many people only a monotonous machine of songs. We do not associate it with the freedom and peace of the country, and so its song does not move our imaginations as the song of the nightingale or the willow-wren does. It seems, in most of our moods, simply a noise, as the song of the willow-wren itself would do if the willow-wren were a prisoner in the garden. ✓

I fancy the townsman's objection to the crowing of cocks is also due to the fact that he hears it in his imagination, not as a country noise, but as a town noise. There are people living in the country who are disturbed by crowing cocks in the small hours, but they are for the most part townsmen who have migrated to the country. I am sure that there is nothing essentially unpleasant to the ear of man in the crowing of cocks. The very name, *chanticler*, suggests that human beings loved the sound of cock-crowing till cocks were imported into towns. I do not think the bird has many enemies among the poets, and yet to the ear of the townsman the crowing of a cock in the small hours is scarcely less maddening than the sound of an electric drill. Some years ago a London magistrate declared from the bench that "Nothing more deadly or destructive to health and nerves can well be conceived than this perpetual cock-crowing." If this were true, with what nervous wrecks of men and women would the countryside of England be strewn! But, of course, it is not true. It is only the townsman's intolerance of the addition of yet more noises of town that makes him speak ill of the noble music of *chanticler*. It is his urban nerves, not the notes of the bird, that are at fault. I

doubt, indeed, whether man in a state of nature has any particular dislike of noise. The natural man, when he is young, loves to make a noise, whether by kicking a tin can or drawing a stick along railings. Some of his primitive instruments of music, such as drums, show how much he loves noise for the sake of noise. Italians and Frenchmen, living nearer the sunshine than ourselves, take pleasure even in the noises made by machinery, and rejoice in producing the maximum instead of the minimum of noise with their motor-cars. There is a kind of Wagnerian music in the traffic of Rome and of Nice. In Florence, the deliberate cracking of whips by the mule-drivers is like the noise of a battle. Perhaps, if we of the northern nations could persuade ourselves that the hatred of noise is not natural, and that there is no noise so ear-splitting that it cannot be enjoyed by those who can enjoy noise, we should end, not only by becoming reconciled to electric drills, motor-horns, grinding brakes, barrel-organs, barking dogs, gramophones at open windows, and shouting newsboys, but by getting positively to like them. We cannot get rid of noise in any case, so that we may as well learn to enjoy it. There are, by all accounts, worse things than noises in Hell, though, to hear a neurotic townsman talking, you would not think so. In order to think well of noise, indeed, one has only to imagine what a modern city would be if all noise were totally abolished—if soundless motor-cars sped through silent streets, if our feet made no sound on the pavements as we walked, if builders put up houses amid a silence as of the dead, if nothing that moved made a sound, and men, horses and birds went about their business as silent as moths. No continuous chorus of motor-horns or crowing cocks could be so “destructive to health and nerves” as so still and universal a silence. After a week of it we should weep tears of joy if all the dogs suddenly began to bark again and all the sirens in the docks and factories to make a hideous hooting.

ROBERT LYND. (1879—)

## A PHILOSOPHER THAT FAILED

Of Oliver Edwards, nothing, I believe, is known beyond the fact that he had been at Pembroke College with Dr. Johnson; that he was a solicitor in Barnard's Inn; that he married twice; that he lived on a little farm of sixty acres near Stevenage and came to London twice a week; and that he wore grey clothes and a wig with many curls, and went to church on Good Fridays. We know of Edward's life only this, and of his speech we have only some dozen sentences; and yet he will live for ever, by virtue of having crossed the stage of literature on one fine morning one hundred and twenty-nine years ago. He might be likened to the bird with which the Venerable Bede compared the life of man in a famous and beautiful passage: the bird that flies out of the dark void into the lighted banqueting hall and out again into the void once more. So with Edwards: for sixty years he was not; then he met Dr. Johnson and his Boswell in Butcher Row, stayed with them for an hour; and was not again. But the hour was sufficient: it gave him time to make his one deathless remark. By virtue of that remark he lives, and will live.

Edward's day was Good Friday, April 17, 1778—"a delightful day," says Boswell. How little the good Edwards can have thought, as he climbed out of his bed in Barnard's Inn that morning and donned his grey clothes and his curly wig, that he was about to become immortal. He spent, I take it, the early hours in his office, reading conveyances or deeds and writing letters; then he went to

church, whither Dr. Johnson and Boswell had also gone, to St. Clement's, which through some strange stroke of luck is standing, with the Doctor's pew intact within it, to this dark, irreverent, rebuilding day.

On the way Boswell (who could grow the flower quite easily now, having obtained much seed) remarked that Fleet Street was the most cheerful scene in the world, adding, skilfully as he thought, "Fleet Street is, in my mind, more delightful than Tempe!" The Doctor, however, having the same dislike of the imitator that most teachers and all cynics possess, had his dash of cold water ready. "Ay, ay, but let it be compared with Mull." So they passed on to church, where the Doctor was pleased to see so numerous a congregation.

It was after church that they met Edwards, whom Johnson had not seen for forty years. The recognition came from the lawyer, a talkative, friendly, and not easily daunted man, who thereafter quickly got to work and enlarged to Boswell on the pleasure of living in the country. Boswell, again in the true Johnsonian manner, replied, "I have no notion of this, sir. What you have to entertain you is, I think, exhausted in half an hour." But Edwards was deeper and more sincere. "What," he said, "don't you love to have hope realised? I see my grass, and my corn, and my trees growing. Now, for instance, I am curious to see if this frost has not nipped my fruit trees." Johnson, who had been in a reverie, possibly missing the familiar scent of incense,—for, in spite of Boswell's innuendoes to the contrary, Edwards does not appear to have been at all impressed by the magnitude and lustre of his old friend,—here remarked, "You find, sir, you have fears as well as hopes;" and I am glad he did so, for it gave Boswell the opportunity to add the reflection, "So well did he see the whole when another saw but the half of a subject." And yet it is more than likely that Edwards saw the whole too.

Being comfortably seated in the Bolt Court library on this sunny Good Friday, Edwards, who had already commented with delightful bluntness, but perfect innocence, on the Doctor's age, remarked, "Sir, I remember you would not let us say 'prodigious' at college. For even then," he added, turning to Boswell, "he was delicate in language, and we all feared him." Johnson said nothing of this at the time, but to his Boswell said afterwards, in private, "Sir, they respected me for my literature"—meaning by "they" the undergraduates—"and yet it was not great but by comparison. Sir, it is amazing how little literature there is in the world." That was one hundred and twenty-nine years ago, and it is amazing still.

The conversation with Edwards then turned to money, and it came out that the lawyer had given much away. He also admitted to a longing to be a parson and live in comfort and comparative idleness. Johnson had an opening here, and took it. "I would rather have Chancery suits upon my hands," he said, "than the care of souls. No, sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life." Edwards, however, did. There is no evidence that the Doctor convinced him. My impression is that he was never convinced by anyone's arguments. I picture him as the kind of man who goes through life contentedly, secure in his own opinion.

Nothing could daunt Edwards, and so innocent and happy was he that he had no notion he was not observing the strict rules of the game. The rules of the Johnson conversational game made it imperative that you should utter only questions or provocative opinions, and then wait for the answer and receive it humbly. But Edwards smilingly broke them all. He asked questions, it is true, but long before the Doctor could reply he had volunteered, with appalling hardihood, scraps of autobiography. If there is one thing an autobiographer like Johnson cannot

stand it is the autobiography of others. And yet the Doctor, with his great human imagination, knew that Edwards was a pearl of sincerity and candour, and in his heart, I am sure, valued him accordingly. "I have been twice married, Doctor," said Edwards, *apropos* of nothing, cheerily adding the terrifying sentiment, "You, I suppose, have never known what it was to have a wife?" This—to Johnson! We can see Boswell shivering on his chair's edge. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "I have known what it was to have a wife, and (in a solemn, tender, faltering tone) I have known what it was to lose a wife. It had almost broke my heart." Edwards was unabashed. He said instantly, "How do you live, sir?" adding, "For my part, I must have my regular meals and a glass of good wine." Dr. Johnson replied suitably—the kind of reply that would usually settle the matter among his guests—"I now drink no wine, sir. Early in life I drank wine; for many years I drank none. I then for some years drank a great deal." Edwards rose to a fine height of irreverence here, to the immense dismay, I have no doubt, of Boswell. who, with all his advantages, had not been at Pembroke with his hero. He cut in with, "Some hogsheads, I warrant you." The Doctor succeeded in taking no notice (quite possibly he was secretly flattered; we all like to be credited with great deeds), and continued his dull alimentary history; but the victory was Edwards's, for the Doctor, when asked if he ate supper, merely and very uncharacteristically said "No," leaving it for his visitor to remark, with something of the great man's own manner made human, "For my part, now, I consider supper as a turnpike through which one must pass in order to get to bed."

That is good enough; but it is not the single remark by which Edwards is known—on which his deathless fame rests. That had come earlier. "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson," said Edwards. "I have tried, too, in my time to be a philosopher; but I don't know how; cheer-

fulness was always breaking it." That was Edward's great speech. By virtue of that candid confession he takes his place with the shining company of simple souls, the hierarchy of the ingenuous. It was too much for Boswell, who had no eye for children, young or old. But on repeating it to Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Malone, and, indeed, all the eminent men he knew, they said with one accord that "it was an exquisite trait of character." He therefore refrained from belittling it in the book.

To Boswell's intense relief, Edwards at last went. He had begun by calling Dr. Johnson (who was sixty-nine) old; he left with another reference to his age. Looking him full in the face, he said, "You'll find in Dr. Young the line,

'O my coevals! remnants of yourselves.'"

When he was gone, Boswell came to himself again, and quickly remarked that he thought him a weak man; and the Doctor, smarting under the imputation of senility, was, I regret to say, weak enough to agree. But they were both wrong. Edwards was a strong man—strong in his cheerfulness and his transparency.

E. V. LUCAS. (1868—)

## NOTES





## OF STUDIES.

Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, one of the greatest writers of English prose, was born in 1561, and died in 1626. After leaving Trinity College, Cambridge, Bacon was called to the Bar in 1582, and entered Parliament two years later. Under King James I Bacon became Attorney-General, and in 1618 Chancellor. Three years later he pleaded guilty to bribery, was disgraced, and spent his remaining years in literary pursuits.

His earliest work of importance was the *Essays*, from which this essay is taken. His scientific works include *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) and the *Novum Organum* (1620). Other writings are the *History of Henry VII* and the *New Atlantis*.

The language of the *Essays* is usually simple, brief and clear, although there are occasional archaisms. Bacon's prose style, particularly in the *Essays*, is brilliant by reason of its brevity, occasional epigrams, antithesis and balance of sentences.

**Expert men:** men who become efficient by practice and experience, as opposed to merely *learned men*.

**Curiously:** with care, attentively.

**Flashy:** insipid, tasteless.

**Abeunt studia &c:** 'studies pass into habits.'

**The School-men:** teachers in medieval European Universities or theologians dealing with religious doctrines by rules of Aristotelian logic. The Aristotelian teaching of the medieval Schools and Universities was called Scholasticism, and was characterized by its stiff and formal method of discussion.

**Cymini Sectores:** 'dividers of cummin seeds;' but Bacon used the Latin phrase in the sense of 'hair-splitters.'

**beat over:** a metaphor from hunting.

**let him study the lawyers' cases:** because in the lawyers' cases he will learn how to seek for precedents far and wide to illustrate the matter in question.

## II

## REFLECTIONS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Joseph Addison was born in 1672. He was educated at Charterhouse School and Oxford. He became a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. In 1699 he obtained a travelling scholarship and toured Europe. His high literary reputation rests upon his association with his friend Steele in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. He died in 1719.

The essay given here is No. 26 of the *Spectator*. Addison's style, while lacking the brilliance of Bacon's epigrams, reveals the same balance and antithesis. There is equal care, and perhaps more restraint, together with a full share of elevation and dignity.

"the path of an arrow": "Or like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through; even so we, in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end, and had no sign of virtue to show; but were consumed in our own wickedness." From the *Wisdom of Solomon*.

**Blenheim:** battle of, A.D. 1704.

**Sir Cloudesly Shovel:** Commander-in-chief of the Fleet, wrecked off the Scilly Isles on his way home from Gibraltar, 1707. His body was washed ashore, buried by fishermen, afterwards disinterred and laid in Westminster Abbey.

**rostral crowns:** naval decorations.

**the repository of our English Kings:** Westminster Abbey.

**amusement, entertainment:** Addison does not confine these words to light and pleasurable occupations.

**Holymen:** divines, theologians.

## III

## RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

Sir Richard Steele was born in Dublin in 1672, the same year as Addison, and went to the same school and University as the latter. He left Oxford without a degree, and joined the army in 1694. He was a turbulent Whig, and was expelled from the House

of Commons. He wrote a book of devotion (*The Christian Hero*), sentimental plays, and the famous *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays. These show him as a lovable spendthrift, not always sober, always better in intention than in deed, a little consciously tender-hearted in a brutal age—he opposed flogging in schools and (though he fought a duel himself) duelling—good-tempered, with a kindly wit and humour. He died in 1729.

**enjoy no relish of their being:** taste no joy in their life.

**poises the heart:** steadies the heart, gives it true balance.

**beyond all patience of:** beyond all power to endure.

**We, that are very old:** Steele was forty at the time of writing this essay.

**Office of sorrow:** sorrowful duty.

**to make it indifferent:** to make it of no account.

**ignorantly:** unconsciously.

**habit:** garment.

**the smiling earth:** her mortal remains.

**Garraway's coffee-house:** in Exchange Alley, Cornhill.

#### IV

#### LETTER TO THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, the literary dictator of the eighteenth century, was born in 1709, and was educated at Pembroke College, Oxford. His *Vanity of Human Wishes*, a poem, appeared in 1749, followed by the *Rambler* and *Idler* series, and in 1759 *Rasselas*. His *Lives of the Poets* appeared between 1779 and 1781. He died in 1784.

Dr. Johnson's latinized style with its rather ponderous harmonies does not cease to attract. It reveals a remarkable wealth of vocabulary and a careful building up of sentences. Always there is dignity; almost always there is clearness as well.

For a proper understanding of this *Letter* and the corrupt system of patronage prevalent in the eighteenth century, the following quotation from Lord Macaulay's article on Johnson in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* should prove helpful:—

"In 1747 several eminent booksellers (of London) combined to employ him (Dr. Johnson) in the arduous work of preparing a *Dictionary of the English Language* in two folio volumes. The

sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum Johnson had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task. The Prospectus of the *Dictionary* he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliance of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste . . . . . He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent-minded scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

"Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his *Dictionary* by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world . . . . . It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the Prospectus had been addressed. Lord Chesterfield well knew the value of such a compliment; and, therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the *Rambler* had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called the *World*, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of the *World*, the *Dictionary* was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a dictator, nay, of a pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron.

The *Dictionary* came forth without a dedication."

**Le vainqueur &c:** the conqueror of the conqueror of the world.

**The shepherd in 'Virgil' &c:** the reference is to one of Virgil's Eclogues: "Now I know what Love is: not, as I expected to find him, a being who would sympathise with human passions and feelings, but a savage, a native of the rocks, and deriving his nature from theirs."

**till I am solitary:** Johnson had lost his wife in 1752.

## V

### THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN A GARRET.

**Garret:** Room on the top-floor of a house. Poor authors in the 18th century had to live on the top-floors of buildings in small dingy rooms. Johnson himself lived for many years in a garret in Fleet Street. Johnson, in this essay, is giving an ironical account of what in actual life is a very unpleasant experience.

**hardened his front:** become used to the harsh treatment of others.

**fortresses of demonstration:** capacity to explain the truth as he sees it.

**Olympus and Parnassus:** mountains in Greece supposed to be the habitations of the Gods and the Muses respectively.

**Tempe:** a valley in Greece between Olympus and Ossa.

**flexures of Meander:** The windings of the river Meander. From the name of this river we have the English word "meandering" meaning "winding."

**Ida:** the mountain where the three Goddesses Hera, Pallas and Aphrodite appeared before Paris.

**Pythagoras:** A Greek philosopher and mathematician.

**Tibullus:** a Roman poet who wrote elegies.

**Lucretius:** (99—55 B.C.) Roman poet, author of a philosophical poem *De Rerum Natura*.

**Visitants:** Sheriff's officers who come to collect money due on bills.

**ambient element:** The surrounding atmosphere.

**Hippocrates:** A Greek physician. (460—357 B.C.). He

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wrote several medical treatises and also explained the ethics of the medical profession.

**defecated air:** air from which all impurities have been removed.

**boils in a receiver partly exhausted:** water boils at a lower temperature than 100°C. if the pressure of air on its surface is lowered.

**flaccid sides:** a football though it may not be inflated fully will swell and expand if it is taken to a high altitude.

**a tube of mercury:** a barometer.

**barometrical pneumatology:** study of intellect under barometrical observation.

**a patron:** Note Johnson's ironical reference to the patron. cf. The Letter to Lord Chesterfield.

**Bacon describes in Solomon's House:** In Bacon's *New Atlantis* is contained an account of Solomon's House—a place dedicated to experimental research.

**Georgic:** Virgil's poem on farming.

**cock-loft:** under the beams of the roof.

### VI

#### ASEM THE MAN-HATER.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728—1774) is, in the words of Dr. Johnson, 'a poet, naturalist and historian, who left scarcely any style of writing untouched, and touched nothing that he did not adorn.' He was very bad at conversation, and he was often the laughing-stock of London wits; but when he took up his pen none could write as he did.

His best known works are *The Deserted Village* and *The Traveller*, very charming poems; *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 'the best of all modern idyls;' and *The Good-Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, two important comedies in the history of English drama.

**Tauris:** probably Taurus, a mountain-range in the south of Asia Minor.

**Genius:** or *genie*, plural *genii*, a supernatural being, a goblin or sprite of Arabian tales. In Hindustani, *jinn*.

**mansion:** the place where he was standing.

## VII

## A BACHELOR'S COMPLAINT.

Charles Lamb (1775—1834) was born in London in a poor family. He was educated at Christ's Hospital. Circumstances compelled him to join the South Sea House as a clerk. In 1796 his sister Mary, in a fit of insanity, killed her mother. He offered to act as her guardian, and looked after her for the rest of his life. Lamb was a friend of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Hazlitt. He wrote the *Essays of Elia*, some of the finest essays in the English language, and, in collaboration with his sister, brought out a volume of *Tales from Shakespeare*.

**usufruct:** right of enjoyment.

**phoenixes:** the phoenix was a fabulous Arabian bird of which only one specimen was supposed to have existed at a time.

**Spices, myrrh &c:** gifts brought by the Wise Men of the East to the Infant Christ.

**"Like as the arrows &c":** taken from Psalm CKXVII, verses 4 and 5.

**our Prayer-book:** the book of Common Prayer used in the Church of England.

**churching:** a service of thanksgiving after childbirth.

**one daisy differs not &c:** Cp. I Corinthians XV, verse 41. "For one star differeth from another in glory."

**"decent affection and complacent kindness":** taken from Home's *Douglas*.

**Testacea:** an imaginary Latin name for his hostess, meaning shell-fish in allusion to the oysters.

**Cerasia:** another imaginary name, meaning "cherry."

**Morellas:** a fine species of cherries which came originally from Morella in Spain.

## VIII

## ON GETTING UP ON COLD MORNINGS.

**Leigh Hunt**, (1784—1859), was a contemporary of the great English Romantic poets. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, the school for poor boys, where Lamb and Coleridge had been



before him. He began his career as a journalist and miscellaneous writer, and he remained an untiring contributor to various literary periodicals. He was the editor of a well-known journal of the day called *The Examiner*.

Leigh Hunt was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an article attacking the conduct of the Prince Regent. He served his term in prison and emerged a hero in the eyes of the public. The leading men of letters of the day like Wordsworth, Byron, Southey, Coleridge and Keats held him in high esteem; Shelley called him "The gentlest of the wise."

Leigh Hunt wrote poetry as well as prose, but he was greater as a prose-writer than as a poet. His prose has a familiar chatty style and resembles the genial gossip of a friend. There is a certain sprightliness in his manner which is ideally suited for the essay. He is rich in familiar illustrations and homely thoughts. Charles Lamb called him for this reason "a matchless fireside companion."

**Guilio Cordara:** (1704—1785) a minor writer of miscellaneous treatises and poems.

**decumbency:** a botanical term referring to plants which rest on the ground.

**says Milton:** Refer to *Paradise Lost* Book II, 295.

**Queen of France:** Eleanor, wife of Louis VII who afterwards married Henry II of England.

**Emperor Julian:** Roman Emperor.

**Cardinal Bembo:** (1470—1547). An Italian poet and historian.

**Michaelangelo:** (1475—1564). The great Italian painter, sculptor and architect.

**Titian:** (1477—1576). Italian painter.

**Fletcher:** (1579—1625). English dramatist contemporary with Shakespeare.

**Haroun al Raschid:** (786—809). The Caliph of Baghdad mentioned in the *Arabian Nights*.

**Bedreddin Hassan:** A character mentioned in the *Arabian Nights*.

**his mother:** Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689—1762) a writer of famous English letters.

**Sweetly recommends itself etc.:** quoted from *Macbeth* Act I, Sc., 6, ll. 2—4.

**Thomson:** 1700—1748. The author of *The Seasons*, a well-known English poem describing the four seasons.

**Holborn:** supposed to be the longest street in England, but certainly not a very attractive street.

## IX

## ON GOING A JOURNEY.

William Hazlitt (1778—1822) was at first intended for the Unitarian Ministry, of which his father was a member, but turned to art, which he studied in Paris. After an unsuccessful attempt he gave up painting in favour of philosophy and letters. He wrote dramatic reviews for the *Morning Chronicle*, and contributed miscellaneous papers to the *London Magazine*. His temper and political views brought him into frequent clash with his contemporaries, and all his life he was harassed by his literary enmities. His most important works are *The Characteristics of Shakespeare's Plays*, *lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, *Table-Talk* and *The Spirit of the Age*.

**The fields his study &c:** from Bloomfield's *The Farmer's Boy, Spring*.

**a friend in my retreat &c:** from Cowper's *Retirement*.

**May Plume her feathers &c:** from Milton's *Comus*.

**Tilbury:** a type of gig to hold two persons.

**Sunken wrack &c:** from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Act I, Scene 2.

**Leave, oh, leave me &c:** from Gray's *Descent of Odin*; a slight change in the refrain of the Prophets.

**Very stuff of the conscience:** from *Othello*, Act I, Scene 2.

**Out upon such half-faced fellowship:** from *Henry IV*, Part I, Act, I, Scene 3.

**Cobbett (1762—1835):** a contemporary of Hazlitt and author of *Rural Rides*.

**Sterne (1713—1768):** a novelist, author of *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*.

**give it an understanding &c:** from *Hamlet*, Act, I, Scene 2.

**L:** Lamb.

**The cups that cheer &c:** from Cowper's *Task* IV, lines 39-40.

**Beyond Hyde Park &c:** Harriet says to Dorimant in Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (V. 2): "I know all beyond Hyde Park is a desert to you, and that no gallantry can draw you further." It is not an utterance of Sir Fopling Flutter.

## X

### TRAVEL IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

Lord Macaulay (1800—1859) was a brilliant English essayist, orator, statesman and historian. Whatever he touched he made interesting, and he rarely, if at all, wrote a dull page. In history he generally became a partisan and often made sweeping remarks and inaccurate statements. Yet his style is lucid, vigorous, brilliant and full of epigrammatic force. Among his works are the essays on Milton, Johnson, Clive and Hastings and the *History of England from the accession of James II*, from which this extract is taken.

**Charles the Second:** King from 1660—1685.

**Papist:** a Roman Catholic. Not only in the reign of Charles II, but till much later, Roman Catholics in England were always suspected, and lived under great disabilities.

**Pepys, Samuel** (1633—1703): a busy man of affairs and a diarist, who left a personal document of great interest.

**the Menai Straits:** separating Anglesey from Wales.

**Cotton, Charles** (1630—1687): Izaak Walton's colleague and pupil in the *Compleat Angler*, and author of many pleasant verses.

**the peak:** a high hill in Derbyshire, in the southern part of the Pennine Range.

**Vanbrugh, Sir John** (1664—1726): a Restoration dramatist.

**the Restoration:** in 1660 when England again became a monarchy with the accession to the throne of Charles II.

**All Souls College:** at Oxford, founded in 1438.

**rode post:** travelled with post-horses, that is, with haste.

**Evelyn, John** (1620—1726): diarist and miscellaneous writer, and a great traveller.

**Poins and Falstaff:** characters in Shakespeare's *King Henry IV, Part I*.

**Boniface:** in Farquhar's comedy, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, Boniface is an innkeeper and has become synonymous with 'jolly host.' Gibbet is a highwayman in the same play.

**coranto:** a kind of swift-moving dance. See *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc. 3

**our first great poet:** Geoffrey Chaucer (1340—1400), the author of the *Canterbury Tales*.

**the Tabard:** the inn mentioned in the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*. It was here that Chaucer and twenty-nine other pilgrims assembled before starting on their journey to Canterbury.

**valuable plate:** table utensils of silver or gold.

**Johnson:** Dr Samuel Johnson, for whom see lesson IV. This opinion of Johnson about taverns is recorded by Sir John Hawkins in his *Memorabilia*.

**Shenstone, William** (1714—1763): a poet, author of *The School-mistress*.

## XI

### CHRISTMAS.

Washington Irving (1783—1859) was born at New York of a middle class family. Ill-health preventing him from completing his studies, he went to Europe, where he travelled extensively. He was called to the Bar but did not practise. *A History of New York*, a comic work, published in 1809, brought him a modest reputation. *Bracebridge Hall*, published in 1822, is a picture of contemporary English life. Irving crossed the Atlantic a second time in 1824, and spent a number of years on the Continent. On his return to the United States in 1832 he was acknowledged as one of the leading American writers. Irving lived at his house, "Sunnyside," in great simplicity till 1859 when he died. Among his later important works are the *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1849) and *The Lives of Mahomet and his Successors* (1849-50).

**Season of Advent:** the season in the Christian ecclesiastical year immediately preceding Christmas.

**quaint humours:** in the Middle Ages Christmas was celebrated with much merry-making.

**Sherrie-sack:** a wine imported from Xeres.

**Falstaff:** one of Shakespeare's most famous comic character, See *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

"Some Say &c: from *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene 1.

## XII

## NIL NISI BONUM.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811—1863), one of the greatest of English novelists, was born at Calcutta, where his father was in the service of the East India Company. In his novels he satirizes the world of fashion and frivolity. He was accused of being a cynic, but the charge is baseless. His writings show his nobility and kindliness of disposition. His best known novels are *Pendennis*, *Vanity Fair*, *Esmond* and *The Newcomes*.

**Nil nisi bonum:** an abbreviation of a Latin phrase which means: "Of the dead nothing but good should be said."

**pater patriae:** "Father of the country;" the reference is to George Washington, the founder and first President of the United States of America (1732—1799).

**British, almost Irish, virulence:** the tone of British papers was more personal in those days than now.

**Bellot:** a French naval officer and explorer. He died in the Arctic in 1853 while a member of the expedition in search of Franklin.

**a richly-remunerated post in the East:** Lord Macaulay was given a seat in the Supreme Council of India (1834), the salary of which was £10,000 a year.

**Old K. K. court officials:** Kaiserlich Kronlich officials, attached to the Royal household of Austria.

**Schonbrunn:** a royal palace near Vienna.

**a coeur ouvert:** frankly.

**Peters, Pauls &c:** St. Peter's Church in Rome, St. Paul's cathedral in London, St. Sophia's in Constantinople, the Pantheon in Paris.

**Clarissa:** a novel by the first great English novelist, Richardson, published in 1748.

**aidoia:** objects of veneration.

**laus Deo:** "Praise be to God."

## XIII

## THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR.

Thomas Carlyle (1795—1881) was the most striking personality in the literature of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The great bulk of his work is historical and biographical. He attacked the social evils of his day in the spirit of a Hebrew prophet. His message to his generation was: that the grasp of spiritual truth is more important than material comfort; that Justice is the only possible lasting basis of Society; and that the one divine thing within reach of everyone is work. 'Work is Worship,' was the gospel he preached. His moral purpose and emotional fervour elevate his picturesque style to a high level of inspiration. The present extract is taken from his *Past and Present*.

his high calling: the divine mission of every man.

Nature's appointments and regulations: the so-called Laws of Nature.

Know thyself: this is the famous maxim of Solon, the sage and law-giver of Athens.

Hercules: in Greek and Roman mythology, a hero of prodigious strength, who performed twelve immense labours.

the man himself first ceases . . . . . thereby: the soul of man is no longer a wilderness in which his evil passions have free play.

How as a free-flowing channel etc.: the metaphor here is that of a swift river flowing through marshy land. The river gradually makes a channel for itself through the land, draining away the foul water and fertilising the soil.

Life-essence breathed into him: Cp. Genesis, II, 7: 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.'

Labour wide as the earth . . . . . Heaven: the earth is filled with diversified activity and it is through work that man comes in contact with God, the Supreme Worker.

Kepler calculations: Johann Kepler (1571—1630), discovered a regular law in the movements of the planets, determined by their distance from the Sun. This led to Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation.

Newton: see lesson XX.

**Agony of Bloody Sweat:** the agony of Christ on the Cross.

**Liturgy:** a form of public worship.

**Praying (as the old monks did withal) by Working:** the allusion here is to the motto, 'Laborare est Orare, which is the Latin for 'To work is to pray.'

**Evangel:** the latest Gospel mentioned above.

**Its cathedral the Dome of Immensity . . . . of old:** the metaphor is that of a service of worship in a cathedral. In this case the whole earth is the cathedral with heaven as its roof.

**litany:** a series of petitions to God for use in church services.

**psalmody:** the practice of singing psalms or anthems at a church service.

## XIV

## A COUNTRY CRICKET MATCH.

Mary Russell Mitford (1787—1855) is a charming English novelist. Her best work, *Our Village*, from which this extract is taken, contains lively sketches of homely English life—sketches which are remarkable for their freshness and vividness.

**marquee:** a large tent.

**comme il y en a peu:** there are few like him.

**beau ideal:** model or highest type of excellence.

**Lothario:** a gay and unscrupulous character in Rowe's tragedy *The Fair Penitent*.

**to send to Coventry:** an idiomatic expression meaning to refuse to associate with or to boycott.

**pis-aller:** last resource.

**terra incognita:** unknown land.

**Cowley, Abraham:** an English poet and essayist, 1618—1667.

## XV

## HOW MR. SQUEERS TAUGHT HIS PUPILS.

Charles Dickens (1812—1870), the most popular of English novelists and one of the greatest social reformers of his time, was born of a poor family and was forced to earn his living in his childhood by working in a warehouse. He educated himself, turned

shorthand reporter, and became known as a writer by publishing *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37). David Copperfield (1850) is generally considered his greatest novel, wherein he incorporated some of his own painful experiences as a child. He championed the cause of the poor and oppressed and, through his novels, tried to expose the evils from which they suffered. In *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), from which this extract is taken, he drew the attention of the public to the shocking things that went on under the name of 'education' in private schools. Dickens gave to the school carried on by Mr. Wackford Squeers the name of "Dotheboys Hall," pronounced Do-the-boys Hall. To 'do' a person means to swindle him.

Nicholas Nickleby had just accepted an appointment as assistant-teacher at Dotheboys Hall, which was described to him by Mr. Squeers as a school for 'young noblemen,' housed in a 'splendid mansion.' Nicholas arrived with great hopes of a fine career before him, only to be most sadly disappointed.

**a ride of two hundred and odd miles:** from London to Yorkshire in the north of England, where the school was. Nicholas had travelled by coach.

**ready iced:** frosty.

**amiable consort:** note the irony here and at other places in this passage

**brimstone:** sulphur, which is used as a medicine to purify the blood. It was mixed with syrup to make it pleasant to the taste. Sulphur was given to the boys of this school, not only as a medicine, but also to spoil their appetites so that they would eat little.

**usher:** a contemptuous term for an assistant teacher.

**diluted pincushions without the covers:** the porridge given to the boys appeared as if it was made of the saw-dust from pincushions mixed with water, rather than of oat-meal.

**out at knees and elbows:** with knees and elbows showing through the torn clothes.

**coppers:** large copper vessels.

**stir-about:** a kind of stew made from odd scraps of food.



## XVI

## A HEROIC DEED.

George Eliot (1819—80) was the pen-name of Marian Evans, a great English woman novelist. Although she started her literary career rather late in life, and wrote only a few novels, many of them, among which may be mentioned *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Mariner*, occupy a high place in literature. Inspired by deep religious feeling and a high moral sense, George Eliot's view of life was a serious one. Many of her best drawn characters are men and women who live in the light of some high ideal or under the sway of some strong emotion.

The passage given here is taken from the last chapter of *The Mill on the Floss*, one of the finest studies ever written of the plain English character, with its doggedness, its humour, its moral strivings. This novel is the story of Tom Tulliver, a prosaic fellow, who eventually became master at Dorlcote Mill, and of his noble and intelligent sister Maggie, a girl of artistic taste. The narrow-mindedness of Tom has made him drive away Maggie from home, and she has sought shelter in a friend's house. Then a great flood comes, threatening the entire village. Maggie does not think of her own safety, but of that of her brother and mother, trapped by the flood in the mill. She gallantly rescues her brother and is reconciled to him, only to be united with him in death. The novelist brings out the magnanimity and heroism of Maggie. Her spirit of forgiveness and noble love is pictured in noble language.

**The Floss:** the river (now known as the Trent) on which the mill was situated.

**equinox:** equal day and night. There are two equinoxes in the year, one in Spring and the other in Autumn. The autumnal equinox, 22nd September, is meant here.

**Shivers:** small pieces, splinters.

**the threads of ordinary associations:** the natural sequence of ideas.

**awful visitation of God:** God manifesting himself in some terrible concrete form.

**curtain of gloom:** darkness spread everywhere like a curtain.

**the artificial vesture of our life:** the small and unimportant activities in which so much of man's time is spent and which are

like the outer garment of his life.

**the Ripple:** a tributary of the Floss.

**St. Ogg's:** Modern Gainsborough, a port and market-town

**the depths of life:** the strongest and most profound emotions.

**eyes of intense life:** a look of deep love.

**clinging together in fatal fellowship:** joined together to cause death and destruction.

## XVII

**Jack in the box:** a child's toy. On opening the lid of the box, the figure inside jumps out, thus giving a thrill to the child.

**ab ovo:** "ab ovo usque ad mala" is a quotation from Horace which means "from the egg to the apples." Roman feasts began with eggs and ended with apples. So it means "from first to last."

**La Fontaine:** (1621—95) a French poet famous for his verse-tales entitled "Contes et Nouvelles." These were fables taken from Eastern, Greek and Roman Sources. He is by many considered the greatest fabulist in the world's literature.

**Vicar of Wakefield:** a novel by Oliver Goldsmith.

**Tristram Shandy:** A novel originally published in nine volumes between 1760—67. We have here the most amazing group of characters with strange idiosyncracies, and the novel is full of digressions.

**topers of one liquor:** being used to one kind of fiction, their minds are not flexible enough to adapt themselves to a wide variety, just as those used to one brand of liquor cannot relish other varieties.

## XVIII

### THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF VIKRAMADITYA.

Sister Nivedita (Margaret E. Noble, 1867—1911) was a disciple of Swami Vivekanand. She made India her home and lived in Bengal where she was highly honoured and revered. Steeped in the ancient history and legends of India, she wrote books in a style singularly beautiful, rich and melodious. Besides

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the *Cradle Tales of Hinduism*, from which this extract is taken, she wrote *Footfalls of Indian History* and *Web of Indian Life*.

**Homer:** the great epic poet of Greece.

**Dante:** the great Florentine poet (1265—1321). His greatest work is the *Divine Comedy*, a vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.

**King Arthur:** a legendary king of Britain.

**Alfred the Great:** king of the West Saxons from 871—900. He is the one great character of early English history whose name still lives in popular memory, and round whose historical career a vast mass of legend has gathered. He has become the model English king; indeed, the model Englishman.

### XIX

#### THE PIGEONS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Richard Jeffries (1848—1887) is a delightful writer of descriptive prose. He has a keen power of observation and a peculiarly reflective mind. Some of his well-known books are:—*The Game-keeper At Home*; *Hodge and His Master* and *Round About a Great Estate*. Jeffries wrote a few novels which were not successful and are seldom read today. He is an original thinker and his philosophical reflections may be seen in his autobiography called *The Story of my Heart*. The extract given here is taken from *The Life of the Fields*.

**The British Museum:** The largest Museum and Library in England. It was opened in 1753, and the new buildings were erected between 1823—47. The Reading Room of the Library was erected in 1857. This is one of the most famous buildings in London.

**neutral tinted:** grey.

**really books:** The author has in mind books like Plato's *Republic*, *The Holy Bible*, *The Vedas* and *Upanishads*.

## XX

## THE ENGLISH CHARACTER.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803—1882) was born at Boston, in Massachusetts. He is famous as philosopher, lecturer, and poet. His best known works are *Representative Men*, *English Traits*, *Conduct of Life*, and *Poems*. He was a friend of Carlyle, the Scottish thinker and writer (see lesson XIII).

**your merry heart:** a quotation from Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*.

**Froissart** (1338—1410): a celebrated French writer. His *Chronicles* are a vivid, and faithful account of fourteenth-century life.

**Voltaire** (1694—1778): a famous French poet, dramatist, historical and philosophical writer.

**Le Sage**, died 1747, the author of *Gil Blas*.

**Mirabeau** (1749—91): a famous French statesman of the Revolution.

**feuilletons:** articles devoted to light literature and criticism in French newspapers.

**Swedenborg**, born 1688, a Swedish scientist, mystic and philosopher. He tried to found a new religion.

**sharp-tongued dragon:** slain by St. George, the patron saint of England.

**Scandinavian troll:** originally giants, but more familiarly dwarfs or imps, supposed in Sweden and Denmark to inhabit subterranean caves.

**They do not wear their heart etc.:** see *Othello*, I, 1, 65 and 66.

**tack:** a nautical metaphor.

**codes of every empire etc.:** Canada belonged to the French before it became a British colony; Mauritius is an island in the Indian Ocean and at one time was in French hands; *Code Napoleon*, a code based largely on Roman law; *laws of Menu*, or *Manu*, the earliest sacred books of the East, and the basis of Hindu law in Indian courts; *Thing*, a Scandinavian name for a parliament, or court of law. The Vikings had a settlement in the Isle of Man; *Cape of Good Hope* was settled by the Dutch; *Pandects*, the code

of law prepared under the direction of the Emperor Justinian (482—565).

**Newton**, Sir Isaac (1642—1727): a natural philosopher. His chief work is the *Principia*.

**Dugdale** (1605—86): the author of *Antiquities of Warwickshire*.

**Gibbon** (1737—94): the famous historian. His *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is one of the world's great books.

**Hallam** (1777—1859): author of the *Constitutional History of England*.

**Eldon**, Lord Eldon, (1751—1838): Lord High Chancellor of England.

**Peel**, Sir Robert, (1788—1850): English statesman and Prime Minister.

**adipocere**: a greyish, fatty substance.

**Strafford**, the Earl of Strafford, (1593—1641): the chief adviser of King Charles I. He was impeached and executed by the Long Parliament.

**Heimskringla**: the *Lives of the Kings of Iceland*, by Snorri (1179—1241).

**England expects every man to do his duty**: Nelson's famous signal to the British fleet just before the battle of Trafalgar.

## XXI

### REALITY.

Hilaire Belloc, essayist, historian, poet and novelist, was born near Paris in 1870. Four of his great-uncles were generals under Napoleon; his grandfather, an artist, was curator of the Luxembourg Museum; his grandmother was the daughter of an Irishman in the French army; his father was a barrister. Belloc was brought up in Sussex, took his degree at Oxford, and became naturalized as an Englishman in 1903. In this essay Belloc attempts to point out the difference between things as they are and as we imagine them.

**Ruskin**: see notes to lesson XXV.

**The greatest of the French Revolutionists**: Danton—in a speech on 13th August, 1793.

**Algiers:** in North Africa.

**Armada:** a fleet of battleships, from the Spanish Armada sent out against England in 1588. This mighty fleet practically never returned, having been destroyed, partly in the battle with the English, and afterwards by a storm.

**Cerdagne:** part of the Pyrenees in Southern France.

**Tourcarol:** or Tour de Carel, a village in this part of France.

## XXII

### GREATNESS.

Sir Arthur Helps (1813—1875) wrote essays of a type not very familiar to-day, but of great usefulness to the young mind as furnishing ideas of moral value. His *Friends in Council* and *Essays Written in the Intervals of Business* were very popular with the last generation. The outstanding qualities of his style are "simplicity and straightforwardness, sweetness of tone and a certain plain and natural grace."

This essay is taken from *Friends in Council*. Courage and openness of mind, the latter expression used in a wide sense so as to include sympathy, toleration, etc., are according to the writer the elements of greatness.)

**William** (1650—1702), Prince of Orange, and King of England from 1689 to 1702. His life work was to thwart the ambitions of Louis XIV of France. In his war against Louis, William lost a number of battles, but he had a wonderful power of rallying his army after defeat. In the battle of Landen he was defeated, but he showed such bearing at the time of retreat that his soldiers cried:

'Brave, brave, by heaven! He deserves a crown!'

**Marlborough**, first Duke of Marlborough (1650—1722). He was a clear-headed and far-seeing statesman, and the greatest general of his age. Of scarcely any other general can it be said, as it can be said of Marlborough, that he never fought a battle which he did not win, or besieged a place which he did not take. But he was a cold-hearted, selfish and unscrupulous man, and never hesitated to be treacherous if he saw that treachery was to his advantage.

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**Caesar:** Julius Caesar (102—44 B.C.): a great Roman general and the creator of the Roman Imperial system.

**tendrils:** a slender plant-organ attaching itself to another body for support. Human nature is here compared to a plant, growing by throwing its tendrils outwards.

**It has produced . . . . headlong:** the reference is to those Christians who for the development of their own spiritual life, adopted the monastic ideal, and spent their time in self-examination. Such men tended to become bigoted and unsympathetic.

**Natural philosophers:** scientists.

**scrubby commons:** waste land overgrown with brushwood.

**a cruelty constantly turning upon its inventors:** those who practised cruelty themselves became its victims in the end.

**laudator:** one who praises. Horace, the Roman poet, wrote 'laudator temporis acti,' which means 'one who sings the praises of times past or the good old days.'

**appearances:** outward semblance, the position we wish to maintain before the public. Cp. the phrase, 'to keep up appearances.'

**Fates:** in Greek mythology, the three goddesses of destiny.

### XXIII

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE.

Thomas Henry Huxley (1825—95) was a great English scientist of the nineteenth century. It is not very probable that primitive man acquired knowledge in the same way as Huxley imagines, and furthermore some of Huxley's views have since been superseded. Nevertheless, this extract deserves careful study as giving in simple and forceful language the meaning of the scientific outlook, its origin, its development, and its importance to mankind.

**to head it:** to go round the head or source of the stream.

**Nor did the germ . . . . bud:** with the increase of scientific knowledge, ideas on religion also developed.

**Fetish worshippers:** a fetish is an inanimate object worshipped by savages for its magical powers, or as being inhabited by a spirit.

**natural knowledge:** understanding of Nature.

**increasing God's honour . . . . . man's estate:** this is a slight modification of a passage in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, I. V, 11: 'Knowledge . . . . . a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator, and the relief of man's estate.'

**infinitely subtle matter:** physicists believe that space is filled with ether, composed of very tiny particles which are in constant motion.

**who ask for bread and receive ideas:** cp. St. Luke XI, 11: 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?' Here the meaning is that, although the study of astronomy is undertaken for practical purposes, the astronomer is thereby led to a greater understanding of the nature of the universe.

**out of pumps . . . . . air has weight:** in the early stages of engineering, it was noticed that if a piston in contact with water in an ordinary pump was raised, the water followed the piston up the pump. The explanation given for this phenomenon was that 'Nature abhors a vacuum.' But then it was also observed that the water in the pump rose only to a height of about thirty feet, and beyond that Nature did not appear to abhor a vacuum. Finally, the true explanation was discovered, which is that the water under the piston rose because of the pressure of air on the water outside the pump. This led to the conclusion that air has weight.

**the theory of universal gravitation:** the theory propounded by Newton that every body attracts every other body in the universe with a force depending upon the amount of matter in the two bodies and the distance between them.

**Count Rumford:** Sir Benjamin Thompson (1753—1814), a scientist, who was created Count Rumford by the Elector of Bavaria.

**persistence, or indestructibility of energy:** the theory that the total amount of energy in the universe does not vary. By 'energy' is meant the power to do work.

**practical eternity:** for all practical purposes we may consider the universe as eternal.

**the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts:** atoms and molecules, which themselves are composed of even smaller particles known as electrons.

**an eccentric speck:** the earth is no longer thought of as the centre of the universe, as was once believed, but outside the centre,



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and in comparison with other heavenly bodies not larger than a speck of dust.

**endless modifications of life:** all living beings, including man, are continually undergoing modifications in the process of evolution.

**the records of ancient forms:** fossils.

**unhappy metaphor:** to speak of the laws of Nature is to use an unhappy metaphor, because these laws are not imposed from without, as human laws are, but they are the principles according to which all objects in the universe perform their various functions.

### XXIV

#### THE METHOD OF SCIENCE.

**an infinitely finer axis:** the middle point in the beam of a chemist's balance has a knife-edge, so that the tiniest weight turns the scale.

**Moliere:** '(1622—73): a French writer of Comedies. The reference is to M. Jourdain in his play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

**generalize the facts:** conclude that what is true in several cases must be true in all cases of the same kind.

### XXV

#### BOOKS AND HOW TO READ THEM.

John Ruskin (1819—1900), one of the important literary figures of the nineteenth century, was art critic, social reformer and political Economist. His style, easy and familiar, becomes at times highly impassioned and musical. He had a remarkable description power. This, together with sincerity of purpose and his righteous indignation at social wrongs, has secured for him a permanent place in English literature. His best known works are *Modern Painters*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, *Unto this Last*, and *The Crown of Wild Olive*.

This extract is taken from *Of Kings' Treasuries*, the first of the two lectures in *Sesame and Lilies*.

**inscription or scripture:** both of these words are derived from the same Latin root, and mean 'writing.'

**entrée:** right of entry.

**Elysian gates:** entrance to Elysium, where the souls of good people were supposed to dwell after death.

**portières:** curtains hung over doors.

**Fauborg St. Germain:** once an aristocratic quarter of Paris.

**the British Museum:** see Lesson No. XIX.

**Canaille:** the mob, low persons.

## XXVI

## ON READING BOOKS.

Arnold Bennett (1867—1931) was one of the most popular novelists. *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Clayhanger* and *Hilda Lessways* are some of his more important novels. He also wrote for the Press on a variety of subjects. This passage is taken from *Things That Have Interested Me*.

**the philosopher:** Francis Bacon. See his essay on "Studies" included in this selection.

**full mind:** a mind well stored with knowledge and rich with ideas.

**Walter Savage Landor** (1775—1864): a great English writer, whose *Imaginary Conversations* is a model of prose style in English.

**patience:** a game of cards for one person.

**stance:** position taken for a stroke when playing golf.

**swing:** the movement of the hand.

**eye:** judging the direction by the eye.

**put your back into it:** play the game with all your might.

**The aim of reading . . . . rough sea:** the effect of reading is to give the reader mental calm and peace, a feeling of security and inspiration. This is well expressed by a series of similes.

**browse at will . . . . literature:** read books according to his choice, without any fixed rules, from a big library, just as cows and sheep graze freely in a pasture.

## A COLLEGE MAGAZINE.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850—1894) was born in Edinburgh and studied Law at Edinburgh University. His earlier writings include *An Inland Voyage*, *Travels with a Donkey*, and in 1881 appeared a collection of his essays under the title of *Virginibus Puerisque*. The same year saw *Treasure Island*. In 1886 *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was published, to be followed by *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, *Catriona*, and the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*. He wrote verse also, and *A Child's Garden of Verses* contains some of his most characteristic poetry.

Stevenson's work reveals his own charming personality. He never lost his boyishness, and delighted in weaving fancies and making up stories. He delighted in the simple open-air life and the beauties of nature. He celebrated in both prose and verse his joy in 'the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire;' and reveals everywhere his easy *camaraderie* and healthy optimism. He studied closely the art of expression, and by steady practice and constant dissatisfaction with his effort he made himself one of the greatest writers of English.

**Wordsworth** (1770—1850): one of the leaders of the Romantic Revival in poetry at the end of the eighteenth century.

**Sir Thomas Browne** (1605—1682): the antiquarian, whose best known works are *Religio Medici* and *Urn Burial*.

**Defoe** (1661—1731): the author of *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

**Hawthorne**: (1804—1864): an American writer famous chiefly for *The Scarlet Letter*, *Tanglewood Tales* and the *Blithedale Romance*.

**Montaigne** (1533—1592): a French writer, the 'father' of the modern Essay.

**Baudelaire** (1821—1867): the author of *Fleurs du Mal*.

**Obermann** (1804): the masterpiece of Senancour, known to English readers through Matthew Arnold's famous stanzas.

**pasticcio**: patch-work.

**Keats** (1795—1821): a great English poet.

**Cicero** (106—43 B.C.): Roman orator, statesman and philosopher.

**Burns** (1759—1796): the prince of Scottish poets.

**a school:** the group of Elizabethan dramatists. Shakespeare was indebted to his predecessors both for plots and language.

**padding:** writing full of superfluous words, but without much thought.

## XXVIII.

## THE DESERT.

This passage is taken from *Eothen*, one of the most brilliant and popular books of Eastern travel, written by A. W. Kinglake. *Eothen* is important, not so much for the information it contains, but as a revelation of the author's personality, and for his gift of describing in vivid language his own experiences and impressions.

**Valleys dug out . . . . storm:** the strong winds pile the sand up into mounds or dunes, leaving deep depressions between. These little hills and valleys are constantly shifting.

**Samely:** monotonous.

**lank shadow . . . . for Persia:** the shadow of a traveller, journeying south from Cairo, will be thrown by the setting sun towards the east, that is, towards Persia.

**his power is all veiled . . . . clings to his side:** note the beautiful description in this passage of the colours of the sunset.

**old-maidish:** prim and formal, as old unmarried ladies often are.

**oratories:** small prayer-rooms.

**scorched and scorching toast:** toast is bread scorched over a fire, and if eaten hot, may scorch the mouth.

**poor, dear, starving Ireland:** a poor country compared with England, exports large quantities of farm produce, butter, eggs, etc.

**the Genius of the Desert stalked in:** 'Genius' means 'Spirit,' and, according to old Roman belief, different localities had their own guardian spirits. The meaning here is that the spot, where the camp was, and which had for a short while glowed with the warmth of human habitation, became again one with the rest of the desert.

and his fellow-men. Among his writings are *The Purple Island*, *Green Mansions*, *British Birds*, and *Birds and Man*. The story of his early life can be read in *Far Away and Long Ago*.

going the way of: that is, he would soon die.

playing at providence: acting the part of God.

Thoreau, Henry David, (1817—1862) : an American naturalist.. friend of Emerson, author of *Walden* (1854).

Ruskin: see lesson XXV.

a day out: absence for the whole day.

## XXXII

## THE STOLEN BACILLUS.

Herbert George Wells, born in 1866, is an eminent novelist, sociologist and historian. His genial humour, felicity of expression and lively style are revealed in everything that he writes. He has a remarkable gift of story-telling and his *Thirty Strange Stories* obtained immense popularity. He takes particular delight in creating fantastic yet interesting scenes, and in clothing scientific thought in the garb of fiction, as this story shows. His chief works are: (i) scientific romances such as *The Time Machine*, *The Stolen Bacillus*, and *The Food of the Gods*; (ii) charming novels—*Kipps*, *The History of Mr. Polly*; (iii) novels dealing with social, religious or political problems of modern society—*Tono Bungay*, *Man-kind in the Making* and *The World of William Clissold*; and (iv) the famous *Outline of History* and *A Short History of the World*.

**Bacillus:** microscopic vegetable organism, some of which are found in diseased tissues.

**Bacteriologist:** a scientist who studies the habits and movements of bacteria, very tiny organisms (germs) found in decaying substances, and causing many diseases.

**atomies:** very small particles.

**stained:** impregnated with colouring matter for microscopic examination.

**Go forth, increase and multiply &c:** a reminiscence of *Genesis* I, 28, where God says to the new living Creation, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . . . ."

**ethnology:** ethnology is the science of the relations and characteristics of races. Here it means simply 'race.'

**Ravachol:** a French anarchist who in 1892 committed a series of criminal outrages.

**Vaillant:** another French anarchist who in 1893 threw a bomb at the Deputies.

**Vive l' Anarchie:** Long live Anarchy.

### XXXIII

#### A DEFENCE OF PENNY DREADFULS.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874—1936) was educated at St. Paul's School, and studied at the Slade School of Art. He became a journalist of distinction. He wrote poems, novels, a play (*Magic*), detective tales (*The Innocence of Father Brown* &c), several volumes of excellent essays, and valuable criticism (*Orthodoxy*, *Charles Dickens*, *Tremendous Trifles*, etc.) All his work is marked by a trick of brilliant epigrammatic antithesis, by a use of paradox and apparently absurd statements, by the employment of grotesque as well as beautiful illustrations, and by a use of analogy always striking, though not always sound.

This essay is in defence of what is called 'vulgar' literature, stories of stirring adventures which the lower class of boys read. Such fiction, though it may not be called literature, is a necessity and must always exist. Stories of this kind can never be too long, hence there is no end to the adventures of Dick Deadshot. Instead of recognising the inevitability of these books, the educated or upper class blames them for all the crimes of the young—a view sometimes confirmed by the culprits, who do not lack a sense of humour. Bad story writing is not a crime, nor is the tone of these books degrading; they are merely dehumanized narrative. Some of them, like some great works of literature, glorify pirates and romantic murderers, but no one would suppose that the novels of Scott demoralize the educated class. We speak of 'the lower classes' but mean merely humanity minus ourselves. We should

be annoyed if 'the lower classes' confiscated our books and warned us to correct our lives, but they have greater right to do so than we have to suppress penny dreadfuls. For they are normal; we are abnormal. The mass of humanity believes in the primary virtues; it is the educated class which doubts the value of morality.

**Penny dreadful:** a cheap story-book, full of horrors.

**Circean:** Circe, the sorceress, turned her followers into swine.

**dramatis personae:** the characters of a play.

**Balzac** (1799—1850): author of *La Comédie Humaine*, a series of novels on an epic scale.

**Ludgate Circus:** one of the busiest quarters in the heart of the city of London.

**Robin Hood:** a famous medieval outlaw in England, the centre of many old stories.

**Dick Deadshot:** the hero of a series of stories published towards the end of the last century.

**The Egoist:** the greatest novel of George Meredith (1828—1909).

**The Master Builder:** one of the best plays of Henrik Ibsen (1828—1906).

**Mr. George Moore** (1852—1933): author of *Esther Waters*, *A Mummer's Wife*, etc.

**Mr. Hall Caine** (1853—1931): author of *The Christian* and other novels.

**Dick Turpin and Claude Duval:** famous highwaymen. For Claude Duval see the lesson, *Travel in the Seventeenth Century*.

**Mr. Max Pemberton**, born 1863: journalist, novelist playwright. *The Iron Pirate* came out in 1893.

**Whitechapel:** one of the poorer quarters in the East End of London.

**Mr. d' Annunzio:** Gabriel d' Annunzio, Italian novelist, poet, and politician.

a "blood and thunder" literature: stories full of horrors. in French newspapers.

### XXXIV

#### ON THE RULE OF THE ROAD.

**Mr. A. G. Gardiner**, whose pen-name is "Alpha of the Plough," is a well-known living English writer (born 1865). He was for

some time editor of the *Daily Mail*. His light and humorous essays are typical of the modern type, but are distinguished at the same time by a seriousness of purpose in the background. The two essays included in this selection are taken from *Leaves in the Wind*.

**Mr. Arthur Ransome:** English journalist and miscellaneous writer, author of books on Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, etc.

**Petrograd:** formerly the capital of Russia, known as St. Petersburg under the Tzars, and now as Leningrad.

**Piccadilly Circus:** a busy centre in London, where a number of roads meet, and the traffic is very heavy.

**maelstrom:** whirlpool. It is the name of a whirlpool off the coast of Norway. Here the meaning is, a scene of utter confusion.

**the Strand:** a busy street in London, where the Law Courts are.

**Ella Wheeler Wilcox:** American poetess (1855—1919).

**shandy-gaff:** a mixture of beer and ginger-beer.

**Helvellyn:** mountain of Cumberland in England, 3,118 ft. in height.

**swot:** school-slang for 'working hard at books.'

**Blue-book:** Government publications giving information on important public matters.

**turning an honest penny:** earning a livelihood honestly.

**Tristram Shandy:** a novel by Laurence Sterne.

**Treasure Island:** a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson.

**Horn Tooke:** English clergyman and writer (1736—1812).

**barrel-organ:** see lesson XXXVI

**encyclopaedic range:** vast knowledge.

**when Germany came tramping . . . . Belgium:** in 1914.

**Nietzsche:** Friedrich Wilhelm (1844—1900), German philosopher, who propounded the philosophy of the 'superman.'

**the spirit of Prussia:** aggressiveness.

**Keep the home fires burning:** a song popular during the war of 1914—18.

**Hazlitt:** see lesson IX.

**picaresque:** dealing with adventures of rogues or tramps.

**Sancho Panza:** Don Quixote's squire in the famous romance of Cervantes.



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**Marxist:** a follower of Karl Marx (1818—1883), the famous socialist.

**Tolstoyan:** a follower of Count Leo Tolstoy, a Russian writer and philosopher (1828—1910).

**rugger or soccer:** Rugby football or Association football, two varieties of the game of football.

**Mr. Fagin's academy:** in Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, Mr. Fagin had a school for teaching the art of stealing.

### XXXV

#### ALL ABOUT A DOG.

**Pekinese:** Chinese pug dog with long silky hair. Ladies keep these dogs as pets.

**beady-eyed:** having small bright eyes, like beads.

**Wells:** see lesson XXXII

**under the harrow:** in trouble or distress.

**rumpus:** a slang word meaning 'uproar,' 'disturbance.'

**stick by each other:** are loyal to each other.

**an avalanche burst on him:** the indignant protests and appeals of the passengers are compared to an avalanche.

**a group of statuary:** standing in a group as motionless as statues.

**in the spirit:** in accordance with their true meaning or the principle underlying them.

**in the letter:** literally, without understanding the true meaning.

### XXXVI

#### NOISES.

Mr. Robert Lynd, born in 1879, is the literary editor of the *Daily News*. He is an essayist of considerable charm and fancy, and is fond of drawing his matter from Nature. In 1908 was published *Portraits and Impressions*, containing studies of Irish life; *The Book of This and That* appeared in 1915, *Pleasures of Ignorance* in 1922, and *Idling* in 1926.

**Dr. Horton:** a famous Nonconformist preacher.

**gamut:** the whole series of notes in music.

**Sir Walter de Frece:** a magistrate of Brighton.

**whistling for taxi-cabs:** blowing a whistle to summon a taxi-cab.

**the London of to-day:** in recent years various devices have been adopted to lessen street noises.

**barrel-organs:** mechanical musical boxes on wheels with a harsh sound.

**Portland Place, Harley Street:** residential quarters in the west of London; the latter is famous for its doctors and specialists.

**Wordsworth's poem:** *The Reverie of Poor Susan*.

**Cheapside:** a busy commercial quarter in the east of London.

**an electric drill:** a very noisy machine, worked by electricity, to break up city streets prior to repairs.

**Wagnerian music:** Richard Wagner was a famous German composer who lived from 1813 to 1883. 'Full sounding' is the epithet that can best be applied to his music.

**Nice:** a French town on the beautiful sea coast of the Mediterranean called the Riviera. 5.

### XXXVII.

#### A PHILOSOPHER THAT FAILED.

Mr. Edward Verrall Lucas, who was born in 1868, is a very popular writer and editor. There is a pleasing quality about his descriptive essays, and as a novelist he is popular with those who share his amiable view of life. He has a light touch, and is a frequent contributor to *Punch*. He has edited the works, and written a life, of Charles Lamb.

**Pembroke College:** a college at Oxford. Dr. Johnson studied there.

**Dr. Johnson:** see lesson IV.

**Barnard's Inn:** one of the old Inns of Chancery in London, collection of buildings where law students, and later lawyers, lived and worked.

**Stevenage:** a village in Hertfordshire.

**Venerable Bede (673—735):** a priest and historian of Saxon times, who lived in the North of England.

**Butcher Row:** some old buildings near St. Clement's Church in the Strand, in London, which have disappeared long since.

**conveyances:** documents regarding transfer of property.

**this dark, irreverent, rebuilding day:** in modern times, with the rapid growth of London, many old buildings have been demolished to make room for new houses.

**Boswell, James (1740—95):** the biographer of Dr. Johnson, whose devoted admirer he was.

**who could grow the flower . . . . . seed:** who could now imitate the great doctor's manner, having watched him closely and heard him speak so often.

**Tempe:** see lesson No. V.

**dash of cold water:** a chilling retort.

**Mull:** an island off the coast of Scotland. Boswell was a Scotchman.

**missing the familiar scent of incense:** not receiving from Edwards the flattery to which he had become accustomed.

**Bolt Court:** a courtyard off Fleet Street, where Dr. Johnson was then living.

**parson:** clergyman.

**turnpike:** a gate on the road. A small sum had to be paid for passing through, and the amount thus collected went to the repair of the roads.

**Mr. Burke:** Edmund Burke (1729—97), the greatest political thinker in the eighteenth century.

**Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723—92):** a very great portrait painter.

**Mr. Courtenay:** John Courtenay (1738—1815), an Irish friend of Dr. Johnson.

**Mr. Malone:** Anthony Malone (1700—76), the great Shakespearean editor and critic.

**Dr. Young:** Edward Young (1681—1765), the author of *Night Thoughts*. The lines referred to, from the fourth night, are:

"O my co-evals! remnants of yourselves!  
Poor human ruins, tott'ring o'er the grave!"



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